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OR, TRAPPING BIG GAME.

A TALE OF THE GREAT CITY.

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FLASH," "BOY SHADOW," "WIDE-AWAKE
LEN," "DODGER DICK" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A MISSING LETTER.

"I DON'T see what in the world keeps him. Here I've been waiting with my report, but he don't show up worth a copper. Major Manilla, I'm frank to say that I'm disgusted, and if you don't come pretty soon I'll go to bed."

THE PAVEMENT DETECTIVE

"GIVE ME BACK MY PAPERS OR I WILL DASH YOUR BRAINS OUT!" HE SHOUTED.

The speaker was a queer-looking personage, and he stood at the open window of one of the tall tenement-houses of New York and looked into the street far below.

He could see from his lofty station the thousand and one lights that fringed the seemingly endless street; the roar of city life came that up to him as he had heard it time and again; but at that moment he was thinking of something else besides the sights and sounds among which he had lived all his life.

Almost everybody, for squares around, knew the little person called Andy Atom.

They knew, too, or at least some did, that he was the close companion—some said the spy—of a man known as Major Manilla—a dark-faced but handsome person whose taciturn ways had never extended his personal acquaintance or given him popularity with any set.

The twain did not live together, but they met often, as high as six times a day, and whenever Andy could get out, which was not at all times, for he was crippled, the two were seen up in the Park or down under the battery trees in close conversation.

It was verging on to ten o'clock and Andy was getting sleepy.

He yawned while he stood at the window, watching the figures that glided along the street far below, but did not see the man for whom he waited.

At last some one dodged into the house and the boy turned away as he caught the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

The sounds stopped at his door, which opened soon and a man, at sight of whom Andy Atom uttered a joyful cry, stepped into the room.

It was Major Manilla.

He was good looking, sure enough, and tall enough to have made a soldier for the German king's guard.

"Waiting for me, eh?" he exclaimed, coming forward and laying one of his soft brown hands on the boy's shoulder.

"That I was. I thought you weren't coming back any more."

The man smiled.

"I'm like bad money—I always come home," he replied. "I was unexpectedly detained; in fact, I ran across an old friend and we had to chat awhile."

"You've met a good many old friends of late," averred the boy, a tinge of sarcasm in his tone. "But, never mind that, only some of these friends may not prove the best of friends for all."

Major Manilla smiled again and laughed.

"What do you know?" he suddenly asked.

"Not very much, but every little is something, ain't it?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, I've picked up something that may interest you."

"Then, let's have it."

The boy, who looked older than he really was, moved to the table, where he took a chair, and the man followed his example.

"I went down to Mother Rockaway's to-day," Andy continued. "The old woman is as slick as a weasel. You don't catch her asleep, I tell you. She knows a thing or two, and whenever I try to trap her she puts on an extra bit of shrewdness and completely baffles me."

"But, what did she say or do to-day?"

"Said very little, and drew herself into her shell like a terrapin."

"Then you found out nothing?"

"Not by her tongue, that's a fact; but I picked up this," and the hand of the young speaker came out of his bosom and there dropped upon the table at Major Manilla's elbow a letter.

"You got this, did you?" he laughed. "Well, this letter, coming from Mother Rockaway's house, may be worth its weight in diamonds."

The eager man began to unfold the missive, watched by the keen eyes of the boy, and when it had been opened he commenced to read it.

"Do you think she knew you got it?" the major asked, catching the eyes fastened upon him.

"I'm pretty sure she didn't."

"Well, it is a find, and no mistake. It is worth its weight in first-water brilliants—worth a fortune, Andy, my boy!"

"I'm glad to hear that."

Major Manilla reread the letter, which took up a whole sheet, and then folded it carefully and stowed it away in an inner pocket.

His expression showed that he had made a startling discovery—that the letter so cunningly obtained by Andy, was very valuable to him, and he again thanked the boy, but inquired if he thought the woman called Mother Rockaway would suspicion him.

"How are you getting along?" asked Andy.

The major looked surprised. "What do you refer to, Andy?" he demanded.

"Come; I don't want you to think that I'm poking my nose into your business; but, what's to your advantage is to mine, as well, for are we not partners?"

"Yes, yes. Oh, I'm getting along very well, and, with no mishaps, we'll soon have a pile that will do your eyes good to look at."

The major bade the boy good-night and departed, admonishing him as he left to watch out for Mother Rockaway, and if she accused him of purloining the letter, to deny it to the last.

The man with the dark face went down the steps and out into the night, Andy seeing his figure for a moment on the street and then losing it among the passing throng.

Major Manilla drew a cigar and lighted it ere he had gone far, and, ten minutes afterward, entered a saloon, through which he passed to a rear room, where he found a man who appeared to be waiting for him.

Meantime Andy Atom prepared for bed. This did not take much time, and soon he was lying on his hard couch, thinking of the letter and Major Manilla.

The night was warm as midsummer nights are in a great city, and the door opening into the hall was left ajar for air.

Andy had passed some years in that room, and had slept with the door open. He had never been robbed or disturbed.

Now and then a policeman would look in upon him and withdraw, as if he were not the person wanted. He had noticed that, since his meeting Major Manilla, these visits had been more frequent, and more than once he wondered why it was thus, but had never said anything to the major about it.

He was at last fast asleep, when a step came up the stairs and stopped at his door.

By and by this was pushed open, revealing a woman, who glided into the almost furnitureless apartment and toward the sleeping boy.

She was apparently forty, with a sharp face and a pair of keen eyes which let nothing escape them. She smiled once or twice while she contemplated the youngster, and seemed to sneer at his slumber, as if she did not more than half believe it genuine.

All at once she stooped at the edge of the couch and began to go through Andy's scanty wardrobe. Her hands flitted in and out of his pockets and nothing therein escaped her adept fingers.

The woman heaved a sigh of disappointment when at last she gave up her task.

She drew back and looked madly at the boy, and for a moment seemed on the eve of pouncing upon him like a hawk; but she restrained her impulse to throttle him and arose and stood over him.

"The young snake-in-the-grass came to my house, and I missed the letter after he was gone," her thoughts ran. "If I thought it was in the house somewhere, I wouldn't go away until I had it in my hands. It's worth more than its weight in gold to me and to others, as well."

For some time she continued to scrutinize the sleeping-boy, but at last withdrew.

Stopping at the door, she gazed back and ground her teeth.

"Woe to the person into whose hands that letter has fallen," she mentally cried. "I will beat him, whoever he is, and I think I know the man whose heart would leap for joy at the contents of that missive."

She turned away and went down the steps more like a tall shadow than a human being and did not stop again until she entered a room some squares from the house.

"I came back empty-handed," she remarked to a huge black cat that purred up to her as she came in. "That letter was in my hands when that boy came, but I haven't seen it since."

The cat answered with a mew and Mother Rockaway said no more.

Bright and early the next morning Andy Atom opened his eyes and started up in amazement. His garments were not where he had placed them upon retiring. His coat had fallen from the stool and lay on top his pantaloons, contrary to the usual custom, and some of the contents of the pockets were on the floor.

"By Jupiter! some one has been here!" he cried.

He searched the clothes, but did not miss anything; still this did not satisfy him.

Jumping into his clothes he ran down-stairs and into a dirty room occupied by a little man who scowled at sight of him.

"Was the ghost up to see you last night, Andy?" this man demanded.

"What was it like?"

"A tall woman in black, as thin as a rail, with a hatchet face and all-seeing eyes."

The boy started.

"Mother Rockaway!" he gasped.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENTRAPPED PENNSYLVANIAN.

WHILE Andy Atom was speculating over what he heard from the man on the lower floor, Major Manilla was watching the arrivals in the Union Depot in Jersey City.

The handsome fellow had crossed over at daylight and was on the alert taking in the crowds that left the incoming trains and letting no one escape his eager eyes.

He had stationed himself where he could see all who moved toward the ferry and had been on guard ever since entering the depot.

All at once he started and uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

A man well in years had alighted from the train and was coming toward the ferry-boat with an old-fashioned traveling-sack in his hand.

The major watched him closely and after a while moved forward and accosted him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Pine!" he saluted.

The old traveler fell back and stared at the speaker.

"Are you Mr. Lester?" he asked.

"That's my name."

"Bless me, but I thought from what Susan wrote—"

"One of Susan's tricks, perhaps," broke in Manilla. "She told me she intended giving you a surprise and so described me as looking quite unlike my usual self. I hope you've had a pleasant journey."

"Only tolerable. But which way do we go? It has been so long since I was in York that I don't know the way any more."

The major had taken the old man's arm and was conducting him toward the boat.

In reply to a question, he assured him that "Susan" was quite well and would be delighted to see him, whereupon the old gentleman remarked that he hoped Susan had kept the big secret, and that he would find things well under way when he reached her.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Lester," he went on, completely duped by Major Manilla. "I think you are a tip-top gentleman to come over here to meet me. Susan couldn't come, I suppose?"

"She would have come, but the hour was so early, you know, and I had nothing on my hands, so I thought I would undertake the job."

The couple had reached the boat by this time, and in a little while it put off, the old man watching its movements with the delight of a child.

Arrived at the New York side, Manilla guided his charge ashore, and the two were soon swallowed up in the crowd of passengers and people.

"This ain't Susan's carriage, I hope?" said the old man when a cab, hailed by the major, came up to receive them.

"No, but it will take us to her," was the answer, and in a jiffy they were thumping over the streets.

The drive did not last very long. When the cab stopped the major assisted his charge to alight, and after walking half a square, showed him into a house, the number of which was no longer on the door.

"We'll take what you've brought with you," said the major, looking sharply at the old man, who fell back with a gasp of fear.

"What do you mean, sir?" he demanded.

"What, aren't you Caleb Pine, of Harrisburg?"

"That's the name my parents gave me fifty-nine years ago."

"I thought so. Yes, Mr. Pine, we'll take the documents you've brought to the city. Are they in the grip?"

The old gentleman sat horror-stricken. His face grew pale and his legs trembled.

The traveling-sack which lay at his feet was suddenly jerked away by Manilla, and, with a wild cry, which told too well that its contents were very precious in the traveler's eyes, Caleb Pine got up and made a grab for the bag.

"Not yet, I guess!" laughed the major; "I want to see what you have in here."

"My God! where am I? Surely this is not Susan's house! You cannot be Luke Lester, of whom she has spoken so often."

"I might be some one else, that's a fact," grinned the conspirator. "You won't find everything true to name in New York."

The Pennsylvanian stood spellbound in the middle of the room. He seemed to realize that he had fallen into the clutches of villains—that

had been the subject of a decoy, yet he could not connect the woman he called Susan with the conspiracy.

Meantime Major Manilla had fallen back out of his reach and was ripping open the traveling sack with his knife.

"Who are you?" cried Caleb Pine.

"Didn't I introduce myself as Lester?" was the retort.

"Yes, but you lied. You are not Lester."

"Call me what you will," smiled the major, as, thrusting a hand into the slit he had cut in the bag he pulled out a handful of papers.

At sight of them Caleb Pine uttered a cry of agony.

"I guess I've struck it rich," the major exclaimed.

There was no answer.

Again the hand dived into the bag and brought up another prize.

"Is this all you have?" he asked, looking up into his victim's blanched face.

"You've got the apple of my eye," was the response. "If you have any mercy in your heart, restore those papers and let me go."

"I'm no fool."

"No, but you're the head rascal of this infamous city."

Major Manilla only laughed again.

All at once Caleb Pine, despite his years, sprang nimbly across the room and seized a chair.

"Give me back my papers or I will dash your brains out against the wall!" he shouted.

"I guess not," retorted the major, coolly. "I am in no danger of losing my brains, for which just now I have more use than ever. Blossom?"

At the call the door on the opposite side of the chamber flew open and there appeared on the threshold a man in whose hand glistened the barrel of a six-shooter.

"If that old duck attempts to drop the chair upon my head, Blossom, you will drop him dead in his Pennsylvania boots," commanded the major.

The chair in Caleb Pine's grip was lowered to the floor.

"What good can those papers do you?" he asked.

"As much as they would do you. I know what they are worth, and the people whom they affect are in this city—"

"What, is the girl here?"

"She is."

"And the boy too?"

"I shouldn't be surprised."

A groan escaped the old man's lips.

"I will give you all I am worth for those papers. I will deed you one of the best farms in the Keystone State."

"You haven't wealth enough to buy them back."

"Then, they shan't do you any good. I will go to the police and tell the story of your villainy."

"You will, eh?" smiled Manilla. "You will give me away to the cops, will you? Now, Mr. Pine, don't put yourself to all that trouble. I don't believe in old men like you exerting themselves so much."

Caleb saw the sarcasm in those words and fell back, sinking into the chair he had lately raised over the major's head with a deep groan.

Manilla continued to examine the traveling sack, but found nothing more that seemed to reward his search, and at last he threw it at its owner's feet.

Old Caleb did not move.

"I believe the old man has fainted," going up to his victim.

He bent over the Pennsylvanian and touched his arm.

"Here, Blossom, bring me some water. He has fainted, sure enough! I'll bring him to, in a jiffy."

Blossom disappeared and the major was alone with the old man.

Suddenly he thrust one hand into old Caleb's bosom, but the moment he touched the flesh the body stirred. In an instant the long hands of the old man came up and fell over the major's head; the following second he was lifted from the floor with the strength of a Hercules and flung against the furthest wall at the foot of which he sunk with a gasp.

All this did not occupy a second of time.

Caleb Pine then seized the papers Manilla had taken from the ripped bag and was crowding them back into it when Blossom rushed into the apartment with a basin of water.

"Jerusalem!" cried the major's man, falling back from before the flashing eyes of the man from Harrisburg. "I thought—"

"That I had fainted, you rascal!" was the in-

terruption. "I was playing 'possum, that's all, and now—"

But, Blossom had dropped the basin and shut the door in Caleb's face.

The entrapped Pennsylvanian heard the key turn in the lock and knew that he was a prisoner in the room with the victim of his rage.

He stood for a moment undecided how to act, when he ran to one of the curtained windows and was about to attempt an escape in that direction when he was struck on the head from behind and, staggering back, fell in a heap on the carpet.

Blossom had opened a door at his back and, advancing, had brought him down with the butt of the revolver.

Caleb Pine was still in the trap. He lay in a dead swoon on the floor while at that very minute a woman in another part of the city was wondering why he did not come.

The chances were that they would never meet again.

CHAPTER III.

DAISY DELL STEPS INTO THE CASE.

MOTHER ROCKAWAY lived quite alone in the little house which she had inhabited for years.

There were few who knew anything about her past, for she had no confidants. It was known by certain people, however, that she had one or two correspondents, and that now and then she received letters over which she would shake her head and smile with satisfaction.

This woman was the "Susan" of Caleb Pine's anxiety, and if she had suspected that the stolen letter had fallen into Major Manilla's hands, she would have been at the Jersey depot, and the wily major might not have scored his infamous triumph.

The letter was from Caleb Pine, announcing that the old man expected to reach the city at a certain hour, and, knowing that he had been there before, she thought he knew enough to come to her house without being met by her at the ferry.

Mother Rockaway had one friend whose acquaintance she had formed some time prior to the opening of our story.

It happened that one bright day, on the Battery, she was saved the loss of her purse at the hand of some adroit crook, by a boy who had been watching the thief some time, and who came to her rescue.

The boy had told her that his name was Daisy Dell Raymond, and that he sometimes did shadowing for the police and detectives, and ended by saying that if ever she had any work in that direction to give him a call, at the same time giving her his address.

When Mother Rockaway found herself despoiled of the letter, she thought of the boy spotter, and the next day found her bright and early in the vicinity of his humble home.

"I may be a fool for running after this boy shadow," thought the woman. "But, I've seen a good deal of boys in my time, and some of them are as sharp as young foxes. This Daisy Dell has bright eyes, and is as quick as a kitten, and will do something for me if he can. Besides, he seems to know everybody, and may be able to tell me something concerning that young weasel who called on me yesterday."

If the woman had called at the house ten minutes later she would not have found the object of her solicitude, but the young shadower was at home, and smiled his recognition when he saw her standing before him.

"I reckon there are very few people in the vicinity of Bleecker street who don't know Andy Atom," observed Daisy Dell, who was a good-looking, agile youth of seventeen. "I can't say that I am on very good terms with him, but we have met. I know something about his partner, too."

"What, has he a partner?" asked Mother Rockaway, astonished.

"To be sure he has, and a nice fellow, too. You would hardly take them for pards, one is so tall and handsome, and the other the very reverse."

"What does the boy's partner call himself?" queried Mother Rockaway.

"Oh, he has more than one name, but to Andy he is known as Major Manilla."

"That's a queer name," said the woman. "Do you think he had anything to do with the missing letter?"

"That is hard to tell. You say the gentleman from Pennsylvania was to have reached the city to-day?"

"That is what the letter said."

"He ought to be met by some one," mused the boy.

"But I'm afraid it is too late now. I am likely to find him at the house when I go back. If I don't—"

The woman paused and seemed to lose color.

"Look here. I can't bear to think of anything happening him in this city the way things are working now. You can keep a secret, can't you?"

"If you think I can't, don't trust me with one."

"Well, I shall tell you something, but not all, for that wouldn't be right. Caleb Pine is my only brother; there are twenty years between us. A good many years ago he adopted a little girl who grew up under his care, married and went away. It was not long before he got word of her death, and then in a very mysterious manner he received some papers showing that the young woman's husband was heir to a large estate in the South. The letter which told him of the death of his adopted daughter said nothing about children, but we learned afterward that she had a boy and a girl; but we have never found them."

"Now, that estate, which really belongs to those children, is worth half a million and would be a good thing for some rascal to play a deep game for. We believe the father to be dead, as well as the mother; but what became of the children? If living, they are nearly grown and if they inherited any of their mother's beauty, they are very handsome, for May Pine, as we called her, was one of the prettiest girls I ever saw. I have been living quietly in this city for years in hopes of discovering some clew to the children, while Caleb continued to dwell on the farm near Harrisburg."

"Several weeks ago I thought I had made a startling discovery; that is, I saw on the street a face which reminded me of May's. At once I wrote to Caleb and he replied saying that he would come on and meet me this morning. It was that letter which I lost and which tells all about his coming, besides dropping something about the secret we have kept so well. I have known this boy, Andy, for some time. He thrust his acquaintance upon me and every once in a while drops in and chats with me. He is a shrewd little piece of humanity and played his game so well that until yesterday I did not suspect him of double dealing. But now that you tell me that he has a partner, and that that partner is a man who is not all he should be, you fill me with fears."

"Andy Atom is a veritable weasel on two legs," declared Daisy Dell. "I once saw him do a little trick for which I could have sent him to the Island, but did not."

"The young scamp," cried Mother Rockaway, shutting her fist. "I know how to treat him when he comes again."

Half an hour later the boy spotter stood on a corner not very far from the scene of the foregoing conversation and was watching a man whose figure was of those dimensions that attract attention.

"That is Andy's friend," said he to himself. "That is the redoubtable Major Manilla."

The major had fully recovered from his collision with the wall against which we have seen him flung by the man from the Keystone State, and appeared to be enjoying the fresh air which came up from the Bay, making all New York expand its lungs for a breath of the needful.

Major Manilla did not seem to have very much business on his hands just then for he had seated himself on one of the benches in the City Hall Park and was enjoying a cigar, the smoke of which now and then hid his face from view.

Presently there came across the thoroughfare, adroitly avoiding the morning crush of vehicles, a boy who, seeing the major, limped to his side and took a seat on the same bench.

This person was no less a character than Andy Atom, and from the moment he spied the major he became burdened with a desire to tell something.

Daisy Dell drew as near to the pair as he could without attracting attention. If he could have gone close enough he would have heard the boy tell all he knew about the visit of Mother Rockaway to his room while he slept.

It was plain that whatever he was saying had a deep interest for Manilla, for he actually let his cigar go out and forgot to relight it when Andy finished.

"Boy," said the major, looking down into the face beside him, "do you know what was in that letter?"

Andy solemnly shook his head.

"No lying!" said the major sternly.

"Honest! Why should I tell a story to you, for we are pards," was the reply.

This response, so solemnly asserted, seemed to satisfy the man for he went on:

"I think she was looking for the letter. As she did not find it she may cease to suspect you and give you no further trouble."

"I hope it will turn out just so. I don't want that woman to suspect me. I don't like the looks of her hands. Her fingers are long and sharp, and she looks as if she could strangle one before he could say 'Jack Robinson.'"

In a short time the major arose and walked off.

Andy Atom did not immediately quit the bench, but watched his partner until his figure became lost in the moving crowd.

"Which one?" mentally questioned Daisy Dell; but he settled the matter by starting off after the man.

The brevity of his trail made him smile.

He saw the major step across the street and enter a telegraph office.

Still watching, the shadower saw him walk up to the counter and begin to write out a message on one of the blanks.

"I'll try the experiment, anyhow," decided the boy detective. "He don't know me, but is liable to before this game is played out."

He slipped into the building and waited a minute, all the time keeping his eyes riveted upon the tall man leaning over the counter.

Presently he walked to the counter, taking a place at Manilla's elbow and drew one of the pads of blanks toward him.

He seemed intent on the message he appeared to be tracing out on the yellowish sheet; but at the same time he was stealing sly glances toward the moving hand of the man he was shadowing.

What did he see on the major's paper. What was that one line which the dark-faced man had just finished, and to which he was signing a name not his own?

Daisy Dell's eyes had rewarded him, for he had read as follows:

"TO PIERRE LAFARGE, New Orleans:—

"All is well. I obtained possession of the property this morning. OTTERPELT."

No wonder the boy detective started. He suddenly tore up his half-scribbled blank, and glided from the office unseen by the busy major.

As he crossed the step Manilla handed his message to one of the telegraph clerks.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT CAME OF A CLUTCH.

THE next few days were spent by Daisy Dell in getting what he called a "firm grip" on the peculiar case Mother Rockaway had placed in his hands.

He could not get the New Orleans telegram out of his head, and when he asked the woman if she knew any one named Pierre Lafarge she shook her head and said she did not.

During these days Daisy Dell had his first interview with Luke Lester, the young man whom Caleb Pine expected to meet at the depot.

He found the young fellow a good-natured person who shared some of Mother Rockaway's confidences, and who said he had known her for several years, though he did not know much about her even yet.

The young detective's meeting with Lester led to another introduction by which he became acquainted with a young girl named Bella Blair, who sometimes wrote in offices; but who earned most of her money in making a certain kind of lace for which she received excellent pay.

A week after the sending of the telegram Daisy Dell came across Andy Atom gliding down a street, not far from the one on which he lived, and as it was after dark he resolved to watch the boy.

Andy had told Daisy Dell that, owing to his deformity, he had never went out of nights; but here he was sneaking in the shadows of the tall buildings like one whose mission was not all it should be.

The tenant of the old house on Bleeker street did not seem to have the least suspicion that he was followed, for he did not look back nor take much notice of those whom he met.

The boy shadower followed him some distance when he hobbled up the steps of one of the "L" depots and took a seat in the first up-town cars that came along.

Daisy Dell at once took a position in the next car and fell to watching the young fellow.

The ride lasted some time, and when Andy scrambled out the boy detective slipped from his car and watched him down to the street.

He soon discovered that Andy had alighted near the entrance of one of the numerous little parks of the city, and presently he was seated

on one of the benches there, as if waiting for some one.

After awhile down the street came the tall figure of Major Manilla, and joined Andy on the seat.

"That's right; birds of a feather!" smiled Daisy Dell.

He saw the major hand the boy some bills; after which Andy went toward the station and waited for the down-town train.

Already the young shadower had discovered that the major was in the habit of visiting a certain house, the key to which he carried, and as the suspected pal turned in the direction of it, after separating from Andy Atom, the boy followed.

"What do you want here?" suddenly said a harsh voice, and a hand at the same time closed on Daisy Dell's wrist with an iron grip.

Instantly the boy spotter turned and looked up into the face above him.

"I know you, sir, and have been looking for you these twenty days," continued the man, who was dark bearded and had a bad eye. "I thought I would run across you again, and by the merest chance I have found you."

All this was a riddle to the young detective, for the man was an entire stranger to him, and he wondered if there could not be a mistake.

"I don't know you," he replied. "You seem to have taken me for some one else."

"I guess not. Just as if I didn't know you!" laughed the man. "I would have known you among a thousand, and I'm not the fellow to let you off."

"But—"

"No attempts to get off!"

All this time Major Manilla was escaping, and Daisy Dell was desirous of tracking him home.

"Take me to Captain Moslem, or to Old Shadow, the detective, whose office is on Broadway, and they will identify me."

"I won't go to that trouble, but will take care of you myself."

Daisy Dell drew himself up and looked across the street. There was no policeman in sight.

"Who do you think I am?" he asked.

"Now, that's a pretty question, isn't it?" smiled the boy's captor. "I wouldn't stop you if I didn't know all about you I want to know."

The mystery was deepening.

Meantime the boy detective was being escorted down the street by the man whose hand gripped his wrist, and the more he thought of the occurrence the deeper grew the puzzle.

Almost in a stupor of amazement Daisy Dell was conducted to a certain house which his captor opened with a night-key, and, in a moment, he found himself in the parlor, released for the first time since his singular arrest.

"I trust you will explain now," he said to the man who had stepped back and was contemplating him with intense satisfaction.

"I don't think it necessary. You are the person I've been scouring the city for and I'm almighty glad to see you in my grip."

Daisy Dell arose with indignation flashing from his eyes.

"You have no right to detain me a single moment. You are no officer and I have committed no crime."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other. "No crime, eh? What do you call this infernal spying of yours?"

"It is not a crime. I spy sometimes in the interest of Justice."

Another laugh broke over the lips of the man in the middle of the room.

"See here," he suddenly cried, leaning toward Daisy Dell. "I want to inform you, Sidewalk Sam, that you have discovered too much and that you are going to be caged for some time, or until we have the game in our hands."

Sidewalk Sam!

Daisy Dell could not repress a start at the name he had just heard.

"Just as I wanted to tell you awhile ago," he exclaimed. "I am not Sidewalk Sam, but quite another person."

"No fibs of this sort now; they won't go down."

"Do I look like Sidewalk Sam, whom I know very well?" and the boy detective straightened and stood before the man who looked and showed his teeth after the manner of a wolf.

"You can't fool me, I say," he replied.

"You are the very person I wanted and you can't convince me that you are not Sidewalk Sam any sooner than you can that you have wings."

"But, I am not that person, all the same."

"Who then, eh?"

"Daisy Dell Raymond."

"Ho, ho, ho! I know that chap. You're not as tall as young Raymond by an inch."

"Not as tall as myself you mean to say. That is curious."

The man did not speak again, for some time, but watched the young spotter with all eyes.

All at once it seemed to dawn upon him that he had made a mistake; he fell back and from the furthest side of the room, continued to gaze at the boy of the pavements. Then he came forward.

"Why didn't you tell me you were Daisy Dell when I first tackled you on the street?" he demanded.

"I wanted to, but you wouldn't let me."

"So you are not Sidewalk Sam? Well, this gets me! You look alike, don't you?"

"I don't think we do."

"Well, since you are not the boy I wanted let me give you a bit of advice. Steer clear of the man you were looking after when I happened to pounce upon you near the Park."

"What do you know about him?"

"Never mind. He isn't to be trifled with. Don't I know the major? And haven't I cause to remember him? As slick as oil and as dangerous as a rattlesnake! I ask your pardon. The most careful will make mistakes at times, and I confess that I have just committed a blunder. I don't want you, Daisy Dell; but if you had been Sidewalk Sam, you would have heard your doom ere this. There's the door," and the man coolly lighted a cigar while the young ferret looked toward the portal.

"One word," said the boy, hesitating. "Did you ever hear of a man called Pierre Lafarge?"

The effect of the name on the other was wonderful. He fell back as if a bomb had dropped at his feet; then he came toward the boy and caught his arm.

"What do you know about him?" he cried.

"I asked you, didn't I?"

"So you did. I have heard the name. Pierre Lafarge. He lives in the South."

"In New Orleans?"

"No, not right in the city. His plantation is near by and within walking distance almost."

"He knows Major Manilla."

"How did you discover all this? But, pshaw! I ought to remember that you are a shadow, who is eternally prying into other people's business. By Jove! I'm in need of a boy like you. I want a ferret myself, and as you don't care whom you serve so long as the money is forthcoming, I would like to give you a job. It's a curious one, too, and rather dangerous. It is diamond cut diamond; knife against knife; and if you want to find out anything about Major Manilla and the game he has on hand just now, you want to enter my service."

The words thrilled Daisy Dell.

"Will you help me?" continued the man. "I hate Major Manilla and I want to get even with the rascal, than whom there is none more cunning among the ten thousand now in New York. Boy, you must help me as against him!"

"I will!" said Daisy Dell, to the stranger's delight.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLOT UNFOLDS ITSELF.

FORTHWITH the man who called himself Capper told the boy detective a strange story.

He said he was from the South and that he had cause for thwarting the designs of Major Manilla, but while he talked Daisy Dell thought he was about as big a rascal as the major.

To the boy it was wolf against wolf, and he found himself enlisted in the service of one of the pair!

Cad Capper told a good deal about Major Manilla, saying among other things, that he had once seen the inside of a prison for a serious crime, and that just now he was playing a hard game for the enriching of himself and a companion whom he called Blossom.

Daisy Dell listened until the man had finished and then put a few questions calculated to bring out something concerning his own life. But the moment he attempted this Mr. Capper shut himself up like a snail—which highly amused the young detective and when he left the house to which he had been taken as a captive he was in the service of his captor.

"I am now in a nice pickle," mused the boy, as he walked along. "I have agreed to report all I discover about the major and his plans to my new master who seems to be playing as deep a game as Manilla himself. I would like to know what has become of Caleb Pine, if he reached the city, and my first move should be to find out."

A visit to Mother Rockaway's told him that

Pennsylvanian had not showed up. The sister was in a great deal of trouble concerning his absence, and Daisy Dell went off without any news.

He had discovered before this that Andy Atom had been going out a good deal of late, and he doubted not that he was meeting Major Manilla in the parks, as he had seen him do.

The dwarf still inhabited the top floor of the tenement, and one evening the young shadower dragged himself up the steps and surprised Mr. Atom at tea.

Andy professed himself glad to see his caller, and invited him to a seat at the small table, though his supper was not large enough for two.

"You'll soon be a millionaire, Andy," declared Daisy Dell, taking in two new cheap pictures which the boy had lately hung on the wall. "You seem to be making a good deal of money just now."

"Why shouldn't I get rich?" was the reply. "I'm no spendthrift, and what I get I don't throw away."

"And, then, you've got a generous friend."

Andy looked surprised.

"I mean the major. Everybody knows that he is your good genius, and nearly every one envies you your good luck."

Andy did not speak for a moment.

"I wish I had a pard like the major," continued Daisy Dell.

"Why don't you get one?" grinned Andy.

"They're rather hard to pick up. Where in the world did you run across him?"

"Stumbled on him one day down-town, and he took a liking to me at sight."

"Got lots of cash, ain't he, Andy?"

"I can't say as to that."

"What does he do?"

"He don't have to do anything, I guess."

"But he has a trade or business of some kind, hasn't he?"

"Not that I knows of," drawled Andy, and then he relapsed into silence, as if he had fathomed the motive for the shrewd questions that his visitor was putting.

For some time Daisy Dell failed to get Andy back to the important subject.

He did not want to return to it, and the young shadow found himself baffled at every point.

All at once Andy leaned toward Daisy Dell, and, transfixing him with his black eyes, said sharply:

"What are you after, anyhow? You seem to want to know all there might be to tell about my friend, the major. Ain't you a spy for the cops? I've heard that you were."

Daisy Dell maintained his composure.

"One hears a good many stories nowadays," he answered with a smile calculated to disarm suspicion.

"But I've seen some things with my own eyes," persisted the Atom. "I don't go to sleep when I get out and I take my eyes with me every time."

"If I am a spy for the police, do you think I would be trying to find out anything against your friend, the handsome major?"

"If you did you would soon wish you had kept your hands out of it," was the quick retort. "He mustn't be fooled with—the major mustn't. He's cooler than the coolest, and those eyes of his can see through a stone wall; I believe they can, anyhow."

"A wonderful man," Daisy admitted.

"Wonderful enough to beat any man who tries to get the best of him. You don't want to make him your foe."

At this juncture footsteps came up the stairs and the two boys listened as they neared the room door.

A strange expression had come to Andy Atom's face and he was all anxiety and fear while he looked toward the entrance.

Presently the door swung open and there stepped into the room the very man they were discussing—Major Manilla!

Andy and his friend exchanged quick and significant glances and the major, with his eyes fastened upon Daisy Dell, came forward with his cat-like tread.

"Got a caller, I see," remarked the man, with a smile for the boy detective. "I hope I don't intrude."

"Of course you do not," assured Daisy Dell. "I was about to leave when you dropped in and will go now. I will see you some other time, Andy."

"Yes, of course. Don't forget to drop in; you're always welcome, Dell."

On the first step among the shadows that lay outside the room Dell paused and listened to a

voice which came from the apartment he had just left.

"Did you mark him?" asked the man's confederate. "He is a spy for the cops and tried to pump me about you. He asked all sorts of questions, but I was too sharp for him, and all the information he got out of me he can stow away in his eye."

"What did you call him?"

"Daisy Dell. He lives on W— street, No. 233—up-stairs, first door to the right. It's a quiet street, but he knows where to live while playing spy for the police and I would advise you to keep an eye on him."

These were the words Daisy heard, and when he went down the steps he knew that he had a dangerous enemy to look after.

If he could have lingered on the stairs he would have heard more, and have seen Major Manilla take from his bosom some papers which he spread out before Andy, whose eyes got an eager glitter when he saw them.

"Andy, the time has come for you to be somebody," explained the major. "I have everything about fixed for your re-entering the world as a long lost heir. How does that strike you?"

The boy fell back and threw up his hands in pretended amazement.

"All you have to do will be to follow my instructions. These papers will fix the matter and I will see that there is no failure. You are the son of one Nolan Ferris who married the adopted child of Caleb Pine, a Pennsylvania farmer. Ferris died in the South some years ago leaving two children who mysteriously disappeared, and the will he left behind has been found; is, in fact, in my hands at this very moment."

Andy listened to these words like a person in a maze.

"How much will I be worth?" he managed to gasp.

"More money than you ever thought of," was the reply. "The son of Nolan Ferris was a cripple from his birth—crippled just as you are. The girl is missing still, but we don't care about that, you see. You must play your cards as I instruct you and we can't fail."

"How long have you known this, major?"

"A long while. You see I didn't want to break the news to you until I had the papers in my hands and I have them here."

"What will Caleb Pine say?"

"Very likely nothing," laughed the major. "He needn't appear in the matter at all. All we have to do is to prove that you are the missing heir and the pile is ours."

Andy Atom leaned forward and looked at the papers which the major had opened up, but from what he could see of them they were so much Greek to him.

"I will do anything to get the fortune," he exclaimed. "But, as I've just told you, you want to look after the boy who left when you came in. He is a spy—one of those sidewalk foxes who see everything for the police and then he was asking me a thousand and one questions about you—"

"He sha'n't be overlooked," put in Manilla. "I propose to bring you out to-morrow."

"As the lost heir?"

"Yes."

"Who will I be from that time on?"

"Franklin Ferris."

"That's a better handle than Andy Atom. And I won't live in this sky-scraper any longer. By Jove, I feel richer than Vanderbilt already. Major, you're a brick—worth your weight in gold."

"Look here, Andy—"

"Mr. Ferris, if you please," broke in the boy.

"I forgot. Now look here. I am going away and will not see you again till I come to bring you out. I intend to see why Daisy Dell wanted to know something about me, and if he is what you say he is—a police spy with intentions against us, he will wish he had never seen the light of day." And, pocketing his papers, the conspirator walked out, leaving Andy alone once more.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FATE OF A FOX.

DAISY DELL soon found himself some distance from the house where he had unexpectedly encountered Major Manilla and was about to enter a cheap restaurant to regale the inner man when he was suddenly accosted by young Lester, the supposed lover of Bella, the pretty lace-maker.

"I have news of a startling nature for you," the young man announced. "Something very remarkable has happened Bella and I want you to know it while it is fresh."

The pair entered the restaurant and took a table in a quiet corner.

"Bella was coming home this afternoon when she encountered a man who insisted on knowing who she was. She was frightened at first, but, seeing that no harm was intended, obliged him, by giving him her name and place of residence."

"What was the man like?" asked Daisy.

In a few words Lester described the person referred to and the boy detective had a word picture of the man called Cad Capper!

"He said to Bella on leaving her that she was worth her weight in gold if she only knew it," continued Lester. "Among other things he said that she was the living image of her mother, which was very surprising to Bella, as you know, she has never known a mother's care—in fact, knows so little about her past life that it might be called a blank to her. She went home half-frightened and sent for me as soon as possible. The man told her he would see her again ere long and stated that she should be careful whom she met, as she had more enemies than she knew of; that a plot was afoot against her, but that he would baffle the plotters and see that she got her rights in the end. You may imagine how his words astonished the girl and how excited I found her when I arrived. It is the most singular thing I ever heard of. Think of Bella having enemies and being worth her weight in gold, just because a man whom she never saw before told her so on the street. What do you think?"

"The whole thing is very strange," declared the boy detective.

"Of course it is. Bella thinks the man meant that she was the long-lost heir to some estate, for he hinted as much; but how should he know that she was the rightful heir, even admitting for argument's sake that she is?"

The young shadower said nothing, but smiled in a manner that still further mystified Lester.

One thing was plain to him and that was that Cad Capper was the enemy of Major Manilla and was playing against him, but for his own schemes. He saw, too, that he was as much the fair lace-maker's foe as the major himself, and that if she fell into the clutches of either she would not be safe.

"I want you to hear the whole story from Bella's lips," continued Lester. "I was hoping I might run across you when all at once I saw you coming in here. Why, it was a piece of fool-luck—nothing less."

Dell promised to visit Bella the next day and hear all about the meeting on the street, and advise her as far as he was able, and a few minutes later he and Lester separated for the night, the young man going off to his boarding-house with his head full of the story he had just told.

The boy detective went from the restaurant to Mother Rockaway's house, and found that woman in a state of excitement. Some one had entered the room during her absence and left a letter on the work-table.

It purported to come from her brother, Caleb Pine, and when the boy spotter had read it, he exclaimed:

"Caleb Pine never wrote that letter. It is a base forgery!"

"But it looks like his handwriting," insisted Mother Rockaway. "That's the way he forms his e's and makes his t's. When I read that letter I almost fell to the floor."

The letter stated that the writer had reached New York, but had concluded to follow a clew to the lost children which he struck while on the road to the city, and having just returned, was now playing a game which he did not want exposed. He said he would tell Mother Rockaway everything in a few days, and wanted her to trust the man who would call upon her and get some papers which were in her hands.

"Have you such papers as this letter mentions?" asked Daisy.

"I have. They are safe where I placed them some time ago."

"They must be very valuable."

"They are—almost as valuable as those Caleb has himself, and he has the Ferris will, which disposes of the estate that belongs to the two lost heirs. I am surprised that Caleb should write me, being in the city. Why don't he call in person? I am sure he could drop in here after dark without being seen."

Daisy Dell was still holding the letter in his hand.

"I say if he wrote this letter, he did so under compulsion," he went on. "It may be Caleb's writing, as you say, but he never wrote it of his own free will."

"Then you think he is in the hands of some villains, do you?"

"It has looked that way all along. May I keep this, Mrs. Rockaway?"

"It is yours."

"Are you sure that the papers which you have been keeping are safe where they are?"

"I am. No one knows where they are. I saw them this afternoon when no one was about."

"You are to be visited by some one who will want those papers," resumed the boy detective. "But you must not give them up?"

"They pass out of my hands only into Caleb's!" was the determined answer. "I don't intend to be robbed. The Southern estate is large enough to attract half the thieves in New York."

Once more the young street scout was on the pave, and in a short time was in his humble room, his head filled with the adventures just had.

Several hours had passed since his interview with Andy, and his mind was reverting to the tenant of the tall house and his friend the major when steps came softly up the stairs just beyond the door.

As he was not the only occupant of the house he did not think much of the sounds until they stopped at his door and a light rap startled him.

The door was not locked.

"Come in!" called out Daisy, and immediately the door swung open and a man entered.

This personage was as tall as Major Manilla, but his face was covered with a brownish beard, which was different from the style of whiskers worn by the plotter. But there was something in the man's eyes that held the boy detective's gaze, and he was looking at it when the stranger spoke.

"Do I address Mr. Dell Raymond?" he asked.

"Dell Raymond is my name," was the response.

"That's good, and I'm glad I've found you at home."

The man had halted near the boy shadower and was looking down into his face.

"Don't make any noise," he went on, at the same time grasping the boy's wrist with a grip of iron. "I have business of importance with you but it cannot be transacted in this house."

"Why not, sir?"

"Simply because it cannot; explanations are unnecessary. We will go to where we can speak with freedom. You will find a carriage at the door."

Daisy Dell, with fear at his heart drew back and stared at the man. He saw that he had been caught by the enemy, and the light which now filled the glowing eyes before him boded evil.

"Come! We can't waste time here; it is too precious," continued the caller. "As I have said, it will do you no good to make the slightest noise. I know what I am doing."

Once more Daisy drew back, but the menace of the eyes was enough to keep back the cry for help rising to his lips.

In a short time the boy detective found himself going down the stairs, still in the grip of the man, and sure enough, there stood a cab at the gutter, and ready to carry him—whither?

There was no one in the street, though the entrapped boy looked in every direction.

He knew there was a policeman just around the nearest corner, but a cry for assistance would only start the horses and he would be out of sight before help could come.

"Get in," ordered the man, opening the door of the cab and thrusting Daisy Dell in. "The less trouble you cause us the better for yourself."

The boy sunk upon the seat, and the next moment the vehicle was rattling over the stones.

This time he had not fallen into Cad Capper's hands, and could not feast himself on the idea that a mistake had been made, for he was sure none had.

The cab continued on for some time, turning corner after corner, and almost crossing the city, from what Daisy Dell could make out, cooped up in the dark as he was.

During the ride his captor did not utter a single word, nor did he speak at all until the vehicle stopped and the door was thrown open.

At the same time a handkerchief was thrown over his face, and he was lifted out of the cab and carried across the sidewalk. In a moment he heard a door open, and then he was set down.

The following minute he was led, still blindfolded, into a room, and all at once the handkerchief fell to the floor, and he was blinded by a flash of light.

"You will turn over to me everything you have on your person," was the injunction.

The boy detective turned toward the speaker,

and was about to utter a defiance, when the brownish beard fell to the floor, and—

The sleek villain of a hundred plots—Major Manilla—stood before him!

CHAPTER VII.

MAJOR MANILLA IS SURPRISED.

A MONTH sometimes makes great changes in peoples' lives.

"How do you like it by this time?" asked a good-looking man who was enjoying a cigar in a finely-furnished parlor in the very heart of New York.

"You ought to be able to see for yourself. I am as happy as a king, and sometimes wonder if the whole thing isn't a dream from which I shall awaken some time."

"You have tested it long enough to know that it is nothing of the sort. This isn't the old tenement, but a big, fine house, and you are living in clover, thanks to a little shrewd work by your best friends."

The smoker looked at the well-dressed boy whom he addressed, and went back to his cigar.

There was something familiar about the boy who heard these words. He was somewhat deformed, and his eyes reminded those who saw him every day of a youth who had dwelt in the topmost story of a tall tenement on Bleeker street.

He had Andy Atom's ways, despite the fact that he was no longer the tenant of the top floor. He had been acknowledged as one of the lost children of Nolan and May Ferris, and was enjoying the proceeds arising from the sale of one of the richest plantations in the South, which had been sold for him by the man who had "discovered" him—the well-known Major Manilla.

Andy's good fortune had been the sensation of the hour. The newspapers had told all their reporters could get hold of, and that was just what Major Manilla had seen fit for them to get, and the boy had been transferred from the tenement to the new home, where he had surrounded himself with more wealth than he had ever dreamed of.

What about Daisy Dell, the boy shadower, and the trail he was on when we saw him entrapped by the cunning major? What had become of Mother Rockaway, and Caleb Pine, and Cad Capper, the bitter enemy of Major Manilla? Seemingly all had disappeared, leaving Andy and the major to the enjoyment of their wealth, and there was no one to say that the cripple was not the true heir, nor that Major Manilla was not a thoroughpaced rogue.

If the reader could have knocked at Mother Rockaway's door a week after the sudden change in Andy Atom's fortune he would have learned that she had gone away and that some other people who knew her not occupied the premises.

If he could have called at the farm owned by Caleb Pine he would have been told that the old man had gone to New York, and that since his departure nothing had been heard of him. The farm was being worked by a nephew, and it was believed that Caleb had been murdered by some sharpers who had first robbed him.

Cad Capper must have gone South, for nothing was heard of him, and no one thought of questioning the right of Andy Atom and Major Manilla to the fortune they were enjoying.

Yes, a month, brief as it is, had worked great changes in the lives of those with whom we have been dealing.

One night Major Manilla came out of the house inhabited by Andy Atom and himself, and lighting a cigar, as was his wont, when in good humor, strolled down the well-lighted street.

The sly rascal looked at peace with the world and if he had been asked he would have told his questioner that he had not an enemy in the world, and that his skirts were clean of trickery.

He was proud of one thing—yes he was—and that was that he had helped a poor boy to the enjoyment of great wealth. He had helped Andy Atom to his own, and he was wont to say that if the lost sister could be found he would see that she got her share.

On this particular occasion the major seemed to have an objective point for he bent his steps toward one of the city parks which he entered, looking carefully about at the people who were already there enjoying the cool night air.

It was evident that the major was keeping an engagement.

Presently there came toward him a man who smiled as he came up and the two took one of the benches under the trees.

"Seems to me you are going it pretty freely

of late," said the major, looking sternly at the man, who was still young, but with the signs of dissipation on his face.

"A fellow has to have his pleasures, you know," was the reply. "You have no right to growl. If I was rolling in the clover that you enjoy, I wouldn't say a word. I don't want very much this time."

"See here. I'm no Vanderbilt," retorted the major tartly. "I can't afford to be bled all the time."

"But you know what I did for the cause in the past and you don't mind paying me, do you?"

Major Manilla looked around and then thrust his hand into his pocket.

"How much do you want?"

"Fifty."

"And you will keep your word this time—you will quit the city, never to return?"

"I've given you that promise."

Slowly and with evident sulkiness Major Manilla counted out some money which he thrust into the man's hands and saw him get up.

"Remember, no coming back!" he said.

The man dropped a curt bow.

Half a minute later Major Manilla was alone on the bench and the man he had paid for his silence was sneaking off among the shadows.

"If he bothers me any more I will see that he is squelched in a manner he won't like," he hissed. "I don't propose to have a fellow of his stripe bleeding us all the time."

He arose and went back, but not to the house he had left some time before.

Suddenly he was accosted by a woman's voice and turning to see who had spoken he found himself face to face with a female whose features seemed to recall something not very pleasant to his mind.

"You must hear me, I don't care what the courts have decided," said the woman, who seemed past fifty. "I am sure you hold the secret of my brother's disappearance; that you know more than has been told and—"

Major Manilla, with a sudden oath, brushed past the woman who threw out one of her bony hands and seized his arm.

"Hands off!" he cried, drawing back and raising his fist. "I don't propose to be dogged by a creature like you. There's an asylum for women of your sort and if you persist in bothering me about your mythical brother, I will find a way to stop you."

The face of the woman grew a shade paler, and she seemed to stagger away.

"No one will listen to my story, as if the authorities are in favor of villainy," she said. "Major Manilla, the time will come when all will be changed—"

"Pish! I've heard such prophecies before now," broke in the conspirator. "Keep away from me, woman; that's all I ask."

"You know I am Mrs. Rockaway and his sister. You know that Caleb Pine reached this city with some very valuable papers in his valise; that he was to come at a certain hour, for there is no doubt, judging from what has happened, that the letter I lost fell into your hands and that you met him at the depot—"

"Enough!" cried the major. "I don't intend to listen another moment. If you follow me I will have you arrested and sent to the lunatic asylum. Things have come to a pretty pass when a gentleman must be insulted on the streets of New York by a woman with a hobby. If I know anything about that brother of yours, why don't you have me arrested?"

Once more Manilla passed on, but this time the woman, who was our old acquaintance, Mother Rockaway, but how changed in looks, did not attempt to bar his progress.

Instead of doing so, she stepped back and covered him with a quivering finger.

"I call down upon your guilty head the vengeance of Heaven!" she exclaimed. "Where is Caleb Pine? Where is Daisy Dell, the boy detective, who was ferreting out your rascality? Major Manilla, your wealth will not last you very long. It will take unto itself wings and fly away. Arrest me? You dare not and you know it! You don't want to stand before the bar of justice and have me point the finger of truth at you and tell all I know."

Every word of these burning sentences fell with terrible distinctness upon the rascal's ears, but he did not seem to mind them. It was not the first time within the past few days that he had been stopped on the streets by Mother Rockaway.

The woman had suddenly turned up to plague him, and he had tried to avoid her, but on several occasions had failed to do so.

"Won't you tell me where those persons are?" roared Mother Rockaway in louder tones. "If you don't I will have you arrested for murder, even if I go to the asylum you speak of and—"

This was the straw that broke Major Manilla's patience.

All at once he came back toward the woman who awaited him with compressed lips and the mien of a tigress.

She did not stir.

What might have happened but for the sudden appearance of a policeman cannot be told; but the moment the major saw the officer his face lit up with pleasure.

"That woman has assaulted me," he said to the officer. "Besides, she is too insane to be at large. Blackwell's is the place for her."

The policeman had already caught sight of Mother Rockaway and was advancing toward her.

"If he sends me to the asylum I'll send him to the gallows!" she shouted.

"I told you so, officer," quietly said the major. "She has claws like a tigress; be careful."

The next moment the iron grip of the policeman had fastened on Mother Rockaway's arm and she was dragged off.

"She won't trouble me any more," chuckled the major, moving off. "They won't pay any attention to her ravings and we are still safe and in clover. By Jove! I was in luck when I ran across her, for she's safely caged now," and he laughed again.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOST TURNS UP.

SAFELY caged!

There was something consoling in that.

No wonder Major Manilla chuckled when he walked off.

If he had looked over his shoulder he would have seen Mother Rockaway in the policeman's grip and on her way to the place she dreaded.

At almost the same moment of these occurrences a boy who wore a haggard look halted on the steps of a certain house and rung a bell which was responded to by a woman of fifty who asked him in curt tones what he wanted.

"Mother Rockaway," answered the boy.

"She ain't here," was the response.

"But she lived here when I went away."

"When was that?"

"About a month ago."

The woman laughed.

"A good many people have died in that time," said she. "We don't know what became of Mother Rockaway, as you call her. We have heard there was such a woman who once lived in this house; but that's all we know."

The boy, who was good-looking, stood and thought.

After awhile he moved down from the step and walked slowly off.

"I expect a good many things have happened since I went off against my will," he mused. "A good many rascalities, too, no doubt."

An hour later that same boy was looking up at the house occupied by Andy Atom and Major Manilla—looking at it with a fierceness which told that he had a grudge against those inside.

The hour was getting late and when he walked away from the house it was to hurry down town and at last rap on a door which was opened by a young girl who showed a pair of black eyes as she peered cautiously out.

"Great heavens! I believe it is Daisy Dell!" she cried her face suddenly lighting up with a smile. "Come in, boy. You don't look like yourself."

"Maybe not, but it makes me feel like myself to get back here once more," and the boy slipped into the house to be led into a little back room where the light revealed the face and figure of Bella, the lace-maker.

"You are Daisy Dell, sure enough," said the delighted girl. "I wish Mr. Lester was here to see you. He has wondered what became of you and we have feared that something bad had happened."

"Something bad did happen, Bella," said the boy with a faint smile. "It would take me a long time to tell the whole story, but I am so anxious to hear the news here that I know you will let my story be postponed."

"Why, when did you get home?" asked the astonished girl.

"I have just struck the city."

Bella drew back and looked long at the young detective.

"Bella, I've come back to make some people wish they had never been born," he went on. "I have been out of the city all this time, without hearing a word from it, and you may know

how anxious I am to hear all that has occurred."

During the next ten minutes Bella talked fast. She told all she knew about the sudden good fortunes of Andy Atom and his pard, the major; she told how Mother Rockaway had suddenly disappeared, and how Cad Capper, the man who had stopped her on the street, saying that she looked like her mother, had never been seen afterward, and a lot more talk.

To all of this Daisy Dell listened with keen interest, not once interrupting the girl to the close of her narrative.

"Bella, I have been shut off from the world all these days," he said, seeming to speak through his teeth. "I was caught in my own house by Major Manilla, and by him or some one else taken out of the city on a vessel. I have been to the islands in the far South Seas. I have seen more of the world than I ever dreamed of seeing; but here I am back again, to make somebody pay for their rascality. More than this I need not tell you at this time. I have called at Mother Rockaway's house, to find that those who inhabit it know nothing about her. What has become of the woman?"

"Of course nothing has been found of Caleb Pine," continued the young detective. "He has fallen a victim to the plotters, and they are just now enjoying the fruits of their labors. Wait, Bella; just wait. My time is coming."

The next day Daisy Dell, while eating his first breakfast in the city after his forced sojourn away, came across an item in the morning paper which almost took his breath.

In a moment he was reading the following:

"AN INSANE WOMAN."

"Late last night Patrolman Kenney arrested, on Cedar street, a crazy woman, who had just assaulted a gentleman against whom she had an imaginary grudge. The poor creature thinks she has been deprived of some valuable papers, and accused the gentleman of having caused the disappearance of several persons, among them her brother Caleb, a Pennsylvania farmer. She was taken to the Mulberry Street Station, where she will be detained until committed to the asylum."

Only this and nothing more; but it told a startling tale for the boy detective.

From that moment his breakfast had no relish for him, and dispatching it in a jiffy, he rushed out of the restaurant and bent his steps toward the station.

In a few minutes he stood in the presence of a woman who sat on a stool in a cell, with her hair disheveled, and her eyes cast upon the floor.

"Mother Rockaway?" said Daisy Dell.

In an instant she looked up, her whole face changing as if by magic, and her figure in a tremble.

"It is Daisy Dell's voice, but what I see before me is the boy's ghost," she exclaimed. "They killed you like they killed Caleb; but—"

She stopped, and, leaning forward, looked searchingly into the boy's eyes, then with a wild cry of real recognition, sprung up and lifted him from the ground.

An hour later the boy ferret came out of the station with a smile on his face.

"If you will let me take care of Mother Rockaway," he said to the officers at the station, "I will be answerable for her conduct. She will make no more street scenes. We have a common cause. Mother Rockaway and I want to clear up a mystery and bring some of the greatest villains in the world to justice, and I can't do it with her in the asylum."

The result of the visit to the station was that Mother Rockaway went forth a free woman, and the two disappeared, leaving behind with the authorities an injunction that nothing should be said of the release.

Long before night Mother Rockaway was the tenant of a little room in a quiet part of the city and Daisy Dell was back on the old trail.

That night Major Manilla, passing down a certain street, had a shadow at his heels but saw it not.

He had left at home the boy whom he had assisted to enormous wealth by a well-played game, and who, seated at the open window, smiled at the people who went by and laughed at some who were poor and crippled.

All at once there came out from among the trees near the house a man who walked toward the place with his eyes fastened upon the face at the window.

Andy Atom saw the man come up and gave him a suspicious stare.

When near the window the man nodded, but Andy did not return the salutation.

"Mebbe you think yourself above such fellows as me now," sneered the stranger, drawing

up alongside the sill and looking into Andy's eyes. "I guess I'm as good as you, and then I'm not enjoying stolen property."

In an instant the boy turned pale and his eyes flashed.

"Have a care how you talk," he cried.

"I know who I'm talking to," was the answer. "You're nothing but an impostor. You have no more right to the money you're enjoying than I have to Gould's millions. What's become of the rascal who played the cards that won the game?"

Andy put up his hand to lower the window when the long fingers of the man outside came forward and gripped his wrist.

"Wait till I'm through," he said. "Wait till I've had my say. If you don't want to listen to me here, by Jove, I'll come inside and talk to you at home. Why, you little thief, it hasn't been long since you were the topmost rat in a tenement. I knew you when you were too poor to feed a fly; but now you have all you want and how did you get it? They say you are Franklin Ferris, but that is a bare-faced lie. Franklin Ferris is dead but his sister is living and what you are enjoying belongs to her. How do you like that, Andy Atom?"

This was too much. Andy rose and broke from the man's grip.

In lunging after his hand, the stranger almost threw himself in at the open window, and Andy shrunk back with a startled cry.

"Don't enter this house!" cried the boy.

"What's that? Do you threaten to do something if I follow? Why, this house isn't yours, I say, and to prove that I have as good a right in it as you have, I'll come in."

A spring carried the speaker to the front step and as the door was unlocked he opened it and entered.

Andy heard his steps in the hallway and flew to a desk, the lid of which he flung up, and snatched from the place a revolver which he leveled at the door.

He did not have to wait long for the man, for the door was soon burst open and he saw him in the room.

"Another step and I will shoot you!" cried the boy heir.

"You will, eh?" coolly grinned the stranger, halting near the threshold. "If you want to exchange what you have stolen from Florence Ferris for the scaffold, blaze away."

Andy lowered the weapon and groaned. Already his courage was oozing out at his finger ends. The very coolness of the man unmanned him. Who was he, and what did he know about the game that had been played so successfully.

"Maybe you would like to know who I am?" said the man, coming forward once more. "I am Nolan Ferris himself. I am the father of Franklin and Florence; the man supposed to be dead, and here you and your partner have sworn that you are my son and heir."

Andy Atom thought he felt the floor sinking beneath him.

CHAPTER IX.

PLAYING HIS PART.

MAJOR MANILLA went off into a fit of laughter when Andy Atom told him about the visit of the man who claimed to be Nolan Ferris.

"He is a rank impostor who is trying to bleed us; that's all," said the major. "If I had been at home I would have sent him to the station too quick. Nolan Ferris, eh? Is that the game he gave you? Bosh!"

"Well, he frightened me, anyhow. I don't want any more such visitors."

"I wish he would meet me on the street. I would just like to show him that I am not to be trifled with," and the cool rascal took out a cigar and began to smoke.

The boy could not help admiring his nerve.

"Are you sure the young fox won't come back?" suddenly asked Andy.

"The boy you call Daisy Dell?"

"Yes."

"What, you're not afraid of him, I hope? Why, of course he won't come back to do us any harm. Where is he? Really, that would be hard to tell; but from what I know, and that isn't very much, he is very likely hunting monkeys in Ceylon, or some other sea-girt isle."

All at once Major Manilla left his chair and went to the window.

Andy Atom had closed it since the stranger's departure and the major now raised it and looked out.

"Is he out there again?" asked the boy, turning a shade paler.

"I guess not. I thought I heard some one stop at the window, but we don't intend to

have any eavesdroppers," and the sash fell, and the plotter came back and resumed his smoking.

The next day was such a pretty one that Andy thought he would spend a short time in the nearest park, and the middle hour of the forenoon found him there.

Very few who knew him when he was the topmost tenant of the old pile on Bleeker street would have recognized him now.

A great change had come over the boy. He wore better clothes and tried to look like an heir to vast estates. Whenever he found himself alone he was sure to contrast his present condition with the other one. Sometimes it all seemed a dream, and it was difficult to think that he was not Andy, the occupant of the rat-infested rooms.

He was watching the procession of people through the open park, when his attention was attracted to a boy of his own age, who appeared to be watching him with some interest.

Andy motioned to the urchin and he came up, a poorly clad, unwashed street Arab, who smiled and touched a ragged hat in deference to riches.

"I've heard about yer good fortune, but couldn't believe it till now," said the boy. "You've struck it rich, haven't you?" and he drew off and surveyed Andy till the latter had to laugh.

"I don't remember you," he said to the gutter snipe.

"Guess not, but I used ter see you on old Bleeker, when you was at the foot of the ladder. My name is Billy Box, an' I never expect ter git to where you ar' at this minute. Do you like yer new life?"

"Fairly well, Billy," replied Andy.

"Don't them clothes feel rather awkward; and the watch, too? I guess I would die in 'em the first day."

"How are things at the old place?" asked Andy.

"Kickin' some. But they're not what they used ter be when you was there."

From this the two boys branched off into a discussion of the times to be had in a tenement where there are lots of children, Andy asking about every one whom he had known in the house he used to inhabit, and Billy Box giving him all the information he had to give.

After awhile Billy asked after Major Manilla, and then, as if he suddenly recalled the name, he inquired after Daisy Dell, saying that he had seen him with Andy on several occasions.

"Daisy went away," said the young nabob.

"Did somebody whom he got ter trackin' kidnap him?"

"I don't know, but I shouldn't be surprised if he was kidnapped. He was a spy, as you may know, Billy."

"I always thought he was, but wasn't sure. He could slip round like a shadow, and I always thought if he ever got ter inquire inter my business affairs, he would wish he hadn't."

Andy Atom was silent.

"Did he ever try ter inquire into your affairs, Andy?" suddenly asked Mr. Box.

"Yes, he did, but I didn't care for that."

"Mebbe your friend did."

"May be he did, Billy," answered Andy, with a significant look which was full of meaning. "You see I have a friend who don't stand any foolishness."

"So I'm told. I wouldn't mind havin' a friend like that myself; but it would be pretty hard to make an heir out of me though I guess the major could do it if he chose."

Andy fell back at a loss whether to get angry or laugh at the singular sentence.

"Billy, you don't mean to insinuate that I am not what I represent myself?" he exclaimed.

"Why should I?" was the instant response. "Ain't you in full possession and what more do you want? What would it amount to if some one should come along and say you weren't the rightful heir to the estate? He would get a back-set that would floor him, for didn't you prove to the full satisfaction of the courts that you were Franklin Ferris, though I can't help callin' you Andy?"

"You are right. I am Franklin Ferris, though for a long time I thought otherwise. It took the major to find out the truth and make another person out of me."

The boys continued in this strain for some time, Billy Box now and then asking a question that was hard to answer, and Andy wondered where he obtained his information.

At last Billy went away leaving the boy nabob in the Park.

In a short time he turned up in quite a dif-

ferent place and was met there by a man who received him with a good deal of pleasure.

"I got a good deal out of him and he didn't suspect me in the least," said Billy Box to this man. "I quizzed him pretty close at times and now and then he drew into his shell like a snail."

Both laughed together.

"I found out that he actually thinks he is Franklin Ferris, thanks to Major Manilla's rascality. He dresses like a young prince and I had to laugh to see the style he tried to put on."

"He'll put some of it off one of these days," said the man, with some bitterness. "I had a notion to choke him in the house last night, but something held me back. The time is coming when I will break that boy's dream and send the plotter over the road if not to the gallows. I can hardly keep from it now."

"If course the time will come if all goes well with us," said Billy Box.

The man, who had a white and haggard face, arose and walked the room.

"What are you going to do next?" he suddenly asked, stopping in the middle of the carpet.

"I am going to find out, if I can, something about Caleb Pine's visit to the city."

"That's a pretty old trail."

"I know it; but it belongs to the game, for without it we may fail, and failure is the last thing we want."

"That is true."

Half an hour later the person called Billy Box was waiting at the door of a house in Jersey City, and when it had opened and he had said something to the woman who appeared, he was admitted and found himself inside.

"My husband will be glad to see you," she said to the boy. "He don't see many people nowadays, and likes to hear them talk."

In a little while the boy stood in a small room where a man reclined in an invalid's chair.

"I know you," said he, extending his hand. "You are the boy who came to me a month ago or thereabouts, and asked me about an occurrence at the depot."

Billy Box started.

"Your memory of faces is excellent," he said. "I have tested my disguise several times during the past twenty-four hours, and it has done good service. Yes, I am Daisy Dell Raymond, and I am here to see if your memory of that event is any better now than it was then."

"It is," cried the invalid with enthusiasm. "I have been thinking over that day's events ever since you went away, and now I am sure I have a good grip on them."

"That suits me exactly, Captain Poynter."

"I remember the countryman who landed that morning with his big, old-fashioned valise. He was met by a nicely dressed man who escorted him to the ferry. I can see it all now, just as though it were happening in this very room. Not only that, but I can tell you how both were dressed."

"Have you seen the nice dressed man since?"

"Several times and one a week ago, or just before I was hurt. I recollect that the old man was surprised to see him that morning, and I thought to myself at the time that something was afoot."

"There was," said the boy shadow; "the biggest piece of deviltry in the world. Do you think you could identify the man who met the old gentlemen?"

"I can swear to him no matter where I find him," was the prompt response.

"That is all, captain," replied the boy. "You may have a chance to identify him before long."

"What ever became of the old man?"

"That's the question."

"Missing?"

"Yes. He hasn't been seen since he landed here that summer morning."

Captain Poynter, the invalid policeman, looked at Daisy Dell for a moment and then said:

"Call on me when you want me. I'm always ready for business!"

CHAPTER X.

STARTLING INFORMATION.

THAT'S a queer letter. It puzzles me not a little, and I can't conceive what the writer means. It is addressed to me plain enough, and seems to be urgent enough to receive immediate attention. I guess I would better go."

Major Manilla had read and reread the letter which the earliest carrier had left at the house for him.

It was very brief, and could have been committed to memory without much difficulty. There was about the missive just enough to ren-

der it somewhat mysterious, and that is the part that puzzled the major.

An hour later he was on the street and on his way to the place mentioned in the letter, which ran as follows:

"MAJOR MANILLA:—

"If you will call at No. 444 O— street at ten o'clock sharp to-morrow morning, you will find there a person who can give you some very startling and valuable information. If you are not in need of information of this kind please destroy this and remain away. This is written in good faith, and by one who knows what he is writing about."

"KNOWLEDGE BOX."

It was a curious letter, sure enough, and when the major decided to call at the number designated he thought he was about to unearth a swindler of some sort.

No. 444 O— street was a small, unpretentious-looking house, with a sign of "Boarders Wanted" hanging alongside the door, and the major had to ring twice before his call was answered and he could get into the place.

He was at a loss to know how he should find the writer of the letter, but the woman who had opened the door came to his relief and asked him if he was not the gentleman who had received a letter to call at that particular hour?

On saying that he was, he was conducted upstairs and shown to a door, where he was left with the injunction to walk in, which he did and found himself face to face with a middle-aged man who looked at him with a smile.

"So you thought you would risk it, did you?" said this person. "Well, I am the person who wrote the letter, and I think I have some important news for you."

Major Manilla had taken a chair and was waiting for the man to proceed.

"You will pardon me, but I think what I am going to say is worth something," he went on.

"That depends on what I think of it," was the reply.

"Then, you are liable to get no information."

"All right," and the major rose and stepped across the room.

The stranger assumed an independent look.

"How is monkey-hunting in Ceylon?" he asked with a grin.

That instant Major Manilla came to a halt and his eyes became riveted on the man in the chair.

"That's a funny question to put to me," said the major.

"But it stopped you, I see, just as I thought it would."

There was no reply.

"You don't want to know what I know, then? You are willing to let the unexpected come and take you unawares. Don't you know that people who are sent away against their will are liable to come back?"

Major Manilla came toward the man and dropped into a chair.

"Why don't you go on?" he said. "You say you have some important news. Why don't you display it?"

"I want what it's worth."

"How much is that?"

"I should say about one hundred dollars."

Major Manilla bit his lips under his brown mustache.

"What's that amount to a man who can command ten times that sum every day if he wants it? You don't realize what might happen; you don't seem to care, either."

"If I thought you knew something worth to me the amount you have named, I wouldn't stop a moment."

"If I don't give you your money's worth you can have it back."

Major Manilla counted out some bills and laid them on the table between them.

"If I think the information is worth that to me, the money is yours; if I conclude otherwise, I shall take it back."

"That is fair."

Then Andy Atom's partner settled back in his chair and eyed the other like a hawk.

"I am going to come to the matter at once," said the stranger. "The other day the Gadfly, an English vessel, reached this city. She came almost direct from the South Seas, where she has been on a trading trip with the natives. Among her passengers was a boy who came back with a purpose, and you may guess what it is without my telling you."

There was a loss of color in the major's face when the speaker paused.

"I happened to be a passenger on the same vessel," he went on. "I have been in Ceylon these ten years. I ran across the boy at one of the ports of the island, and he had just come in

the interior with a strange story, and pretty well banged up with fly stings and battles with the brushwood. The story he tells is a romantic one, and, eager to know just why he should come out to Ceylon alone, I got his confidence to some extent, and heard something of a story which sounds almost incredible.

"Hearing him mention your name with no good feelings, I thought I would warn you, as I could not believe all his story, and that is why I wrote you as I did. Thus I can say that the boy, who claims he was entrapped and sent out to Ceylon by enemies in New York, is back here, ready to give some one trouble. Now, sir, is the information worth the amount on the table?"

"The hundred dollars belong to you," replied Major Manilla.

The man smiled and reached out his hand.

"How does the young rascal look now? Are the fly-stings visible?"

"Not much now. The sailors took charge of him, and by the time we reached the city, he was pretty well cured up, and looks like his old self, I suppose."

Major Manilla rose to go.

"You won't mention me in connection with this piece of news, I hope?"

"Of course not. I thank you, besides. The young rat wants to do some people some damage, and thinks the world will believe the nice tale he has fixed up. I would like to know who would kidnap him and send him out to Ceylon. Why, I wouldn't soil my fingers with a street Arab."

"You don't look like it, that's a fact."

There was a peculiar look in Major Manilla's eyes when he left the house and walked down the street.

"Back, is he?" he exclaimed. "Why, that information is worth a thousand dollars to me. So he has come back to take up the old trail, and to get even with us! I know just what to do. The man in there has armed me, and woe to the young city spy who was giving us such trouble when we bundled him up and shipped him away! The next time it won't be Ceylon," and the speaker clinched his hands and bit his cigar in two.

The wily major soon afterward appeared on a certain street, where he seemed to be acquainted, for he walked into a small store presided over by a man who appeared to recognize him.

"You don't come round much any more," said the storekeeper. "I don't think I've seen you since I read of your good luck in the newspapers. You are in clover now, I suppose. Who would have thought that a boy like that was the lost heir to so much money?"

Major Manilla made some sort of reply and glanced across the street.

"Whatever became of the boy who roomed over there?" he asked. "You ought to know him for he used to drop in here and—"

"I must tell you something very strange," broke in the man. "Last night I saw a boy run up the steps over yonder and ring the bell. He was let in and when he came out and passed my door he crossed the street at the near crossing—I could hardly keep from calling to him. You know I haven't seen him for a whole month."

"I wonder where he's been?"

"Heaven knows. You can't keep run of these city mice. They're liable to go anywhere and to stay till they grow old. It's just as a notion strikes them."

"Do you think he is back in the old quarters?"

"I can't say. If you want to know I'll send Jim across and have him ask for the boy."

Major Manilla consented, and the grocer's son, a bright boy of fourteen, was sent off on the errand.

Five minutes later Jim came back.

"They don't know anything about Daisy Dell over there, so they say," was the report.

"That's queer, after what you've just told me," said the major to the grocer.

"It's a lie!" was the quick response. "I saw the boy with my own eyes, and they needn't say that they don't know anything about him. It means something, eh? They used to say that the boy was employed by the cops, and the people who run the boarding-house may be paid to keep the secret."

Major Manilla had learned enough; he had confirmed the story told by the Gadfly's passenger.

Daisy Dell, the boy detective, was back in the city, and no doubt "at work."

"I've got to trip him or he will trip me, that's all," said Major Manilla to himself. "He won't let any grass grow under his feet and he may

call to his assistance Captain Moslem, or some other spotter just as keen."

He walked several squares, turned suddenly and plunged down a dark street, bringing up at length in front of a frame house.

He was about to knock—the house could not afford a bell—when the door opened and there came out a man whom the major seized with a cry of delight.

"Go back, Blossom!" he cried to this man. "I have work for you! The Old Harry is to pay. The castaway has returned!"

CHAPTER XI.

BLOSSOM'S TRAP.

"I RAN across an old friend in the Park today," said Andy Atom to Major Manilla the next time they met.

"You want to be careful who you talk to just now and it wouldn't be a bad idea if you stayed at home."

The boy's look was full of wonder and he could not see what the major meant.

"Who was your friend?" suddenly questioned the major.

"Billy Box. He asked about you, too, and wanted to know if you couldn't make an heir out of him."

"He did, eh? Who is this Billy Box?"

Andy began to think he might have made a mistake, so he concluded to be chary with his replies, and as he did not answer the major to that gentleman's notion, he found him bending over him with a flash in his eyes.

"You haven't answered me," he said. "I asked you who Billy Box is, and you don't seem to want to tell."

Andy lost color and his face grew a shade paler.

"I guess you've been neatly euchered," laughed Major Manilla. "You have been done for in good shape and I've no doubt that the spy pumped you to his satisfaction."

"What spy?" cried the young nabob.

"Why, the person you have just called Billy Box."

Andy Atom sat spell-bound in the chair. He looked up into the major's face, but did not speak. He seemed to feel that he could not do the subject justice.

"You had better stay in the house with that tongue of yours," continued the irate major.

"If you go out again we'll lose all we possess, if not something more valuable than riches. Billy Box, eh? Well, you young pudding-bag, I'm ashamed of you."

Poor Andy! He did not know what to think. Since he remembered, he could not recall any former acquaintance named Billy Box; but the boy appeared so clever and knew so much about his life in the old tenement, that he thought he might have met him on numerous occasions. It had not once popped into his head that Billy Box was a spy against the fortune he had obtained through the major's shrewdness; but from what he had just heard, he had been made the victim of a cool bit of by-play.

"Hereafter talk to no one," said Major Manilla. "Admit nobody while I am out."

"What has happened?"

"Enough to sustain me in giving such orders. You must keep eyes and ears opened."

"Is the fortune in danger?"

"More than the fortune."

"Merciful heavens, I sha'n't sleep a wink to-night!"

The next instant the hand of Major Manilla fell upon the boy's shoulder and half buried itself there.

"You must not quit this house at all," he went on. "I won't have you outside to be picked up by spies and pumped dry."

"I wish I was Andy Atom and not what you say I am—an heir to thousands. I want to go back to the old tenement and live as dirty as I used to."

"And get sent up the river for playing a game against the law? Do you really want to go back and run the risks?"

Andy would have slid from the chair in a faint if the grip of the man had not prevented.

"You are in my hands, and if you keep a brave heart in your bosom, I'll fetch you through. If you don't, I'll let you drop."

Scarcely comprehending these words, the boy nabob was released, and Major Manilla saw him sink off and heard him ascending the stairs which led to the room where he slept.

A few minutes later, the man of the plot quit the house and took a car down-town.

On one of the well-lighted streets he was touched by a man whom he followed into a room near by.

The man was Blossom.

"I think I have seen him already," said Blossom. "At any rate I have seen Lester, the young man with whom he was sometimes seen before he went away. You remember Lester?"

"The young fellow who sometimes called on the lace-maker whom we once thought of bringing forward as the heir instead of Andy Atom?"

"Yes."

"What has become of the girl?"

"She inhabits the same old place."

"And still makes her wonderful lace?"

"I believe so."

Major Manilla was silent a little while.

"I want the boy out of the way, Blossom. This time it must not be banishment to an island, for islands sometimes give up their prisoners."

"I was against the scheme in the first place, you know."

"So you were. I want a trap set for that boy. I don't care where nor how deadly it is."

The bloated face of Blossom was lit up with a smile.

"Blossom, have you cunning enough to set this trap? Can you catch the young spy of the police? Mother Rockaway is out of the way; she's safe in the asylum by this time, and won't tackle me on the street any more. The boy is the disturbing element just now, and the only person who interferes with our happiness."

All this time Blossom was counting his swollen fingers as if each was a golden stick.

"I'll make each finger worth a hundred to you," said Major Manilla, seeing the man's occupation.

"You will, eh?"

"I will."

Blossom sprung up with a cry of delight.

"It shall be done. I will set a trap for the young fox, one from which there can be no escape."

"Be careful."

"Don't say that to me. You ought to know that I am always careful."

For half an hour longer the two worthies remained in the room, which they left one by one, and when Blossom, the last person to quit the place, came out, there was a gleam of mingled avarice and triumph in his eyes.

A cooler man than this very Blossom when he was sober did not live in Gotham. He knew no fear, could plan and carry out his plans to the letter, and knew every crook and turn in the thousand-and-one streets and alleys of the great mart.

Some time later, but that same night, he might have been seen sneaking down one of the narrow streets near the East River, moving in the shadows of the buildings like a thug on his mission of murder. He knew where he was going and did not stop until he had dodged into a darker alley and run up to a door.

"I want a room," he said to the man who opened at his knock.

"What, you come back again?"

"Why not? I'm liable to turn up at any time."

"Yes; but they said you were dead."

"Did they?" laughed the man. "Well, I'm still in the land of the living, though I'm not as pretty as I used to be. I want a room, I say. Got any boarders now?"

"No."

The old man took a lamp and showed Blossom to one of the top floor rooms of the house and he paid a week's rent.

"So far good," he said to himself as he went out. "I found the trap in good shape. Now, the work is to get the rat in it. Talk about setting traps; I'd like to know who can do it better than old Blossom. I know how to set 'em for I've set many in my time and they've always worked."

Once more this human spider was on the streets of New York.

He went back over the ground he had traversed to the house and in a room, small and dirty, befitting the character he had got to be, he drew a lot of writing paper from a drawer and sat down to write.

Blossom was not an extra penman and he struggled some time with the job he had in hand.

At last he stopped, looked at his work and smiled as he read it as follows:

"MR. RAYMOND:—

I have been compelled to take very poor lodgings since coming to New York; but I want to see you. I have not forgotten the story you told me on ship-board and I think I have run across something that might help you. I accidentally overheard a conversation which actually startled me, and, as it concerns the very man against whom you have a grudge—the major—I think you ought to know it. You will find me in poor quarters, but don't let that stop you if you want the information I have. Come to me after dark—not during the day—as I could

explain if I dared, and I will tell you all. I want to see this man brought to justice and will help you all I can. I am on the third floor, and when you come ask the old man for 'David Doon.' You may know that this is not my name; but it is good enough for the occasion. Don't forget the house and come as soon as possible, for I am not liable to be here all the time.

"YOUR FELLOW PASSENGER."

Having written this infamous decoy letter, Blossom sealed it in a dirty envelope and stamped it.

He then proceeded to address it to Daisy Dell, in care of Mr. Lester, and quitting the house, dropped it into a letter-box, after which he slipped into a near saloon and drank to the success of his scheme.

"That bait will catch the young fox," he grinned to himself. "It can't help doing so. And I'll be feathering my nest for life. Won't I have a hold on the major and the youngster who is rolling in clover? I guess I know a mountain of gold when I see one. I won't have to keep my promise and leave the city just yet. Major Manilla has more work for me; so I'll stay and rake in the shekels."

He slouched back to the house where he had written the letter and went in.

"Still in the city," said a voice not far behind Blossom. "Major Manilla's right bower is still on the ground," and the speaker, who was Daisy Dell, the boy ferret, walked off.

Ah, if he could have followed Blossom to the letter-box and have caught sight of the superscription of the letter he dropped into it, he might have spoiled the success of a dangerous game.

CHAPTER XII.

TRACKED AND STRUCK.

BELLA BLAIR, the pretty lace-maker, was alone in her little room.

She was a person who had few callers. She could count them all on her fingers and she never went anywhere, preferring the seclusion of her house to the streets, even when she had no work.

Ever since her meeting with Cad Capper, the man who told her two startling secrets—that she looked like her mother and that she had enemies—she had had no wish to go out.

One thing was strange to her and that was that she had not met the man since. Of course she sometimes found herself wondering what had become of him, but as days had flown without throwing her again in contact with him, she had begun to believe that he did not know so much after all.

On this particular night Bella's thoughts were on the boy detective who had come back after a month's absence from the city, and she had not forgotten the story he had told her about his forced exile.

Her hands and mind were thus employed when she was startled by a very peculiar knock on her door.

It was a strange hour for a visitor. She was not looking for young Mr. Lester and did not expect a call from Daisy Dell.

Dropping her work, Bella crossed the room and put her hand on the latch.

The rapping was repeated and she opened the door just enough to see on the threshold the figure of a strange man.

"What is it?" asked Bella in breathless tones.

"I would like to see you, miss."

"But I am alone and—"

"I beg your pardon, girl, but I would not see you in the presence of another."

Something seemed to take hold of Bella's hand and cause her to swing back the door.

Into the room there stepped a man whose hair seemed prematurely gray and who gave her a quick look as he crossed the carpet.

The next moment he was standing in the middle of the room, looking at her like a man in a maze and muttering in a singular manner to himself.

His queer actions so alarmed the girl that she shrunk away and could not speak.

"How long have you lived here?" asked the man at last, in a wild voice.

"Do you mean in the city?"

"Yes, yes."

"All my life, I guess."

"Why do you answer me that way?"

"Because I can answer in no other."

Bella's visitor was silent for a moment.

"Are your parents dead?"

"They must be."

The man without replying to this, went to the table and sat down, still watching the fair lace-maker and muttering to himself.

"You say they must be dead," he said at last,

"Did any one ever tell you that you look like your mother?"

The girl started, and thoughts of Cad Capper came back to her.

"A man told me so once," she answered.

"When?"

"It was more than a month ago."

"On the street, eh?"

"Yes, he stopped me on the street."

"What was he like?"

In a few words Bella described the man as well as she could.

"I thought so, muttered the man at the table."

"He told you so but once?"

"That was all."

"They call you Bella Blair, don't they?"

"That is my name," smiled the girl."

"You make lace, I see."

The man took up some of the fine work lying on the table and commenced to examine it; Bella, watching him closely, could see that every now and then he glanced through his lashes and looked at her, also that his hands trembled.

"You wouldn't kiss me, would you, Bella?" suddenly asked the stranger.

In an instant the old feeling of fear took possession of the girl's heart, and she fell back. Surely, the man was not in his right mind, or else a purpose of evil had brought him to her house.

He left the chair as he spoke, and started toward Bella.

"If you won't kiss me let me touch your hand," he said. "I cannot leave this house without having done this. You look like your mother. The man who told you so on the street knew what he was talking about, for he knew her."

Something reassured the girl, for she held out her hands, which the man seized, and before she could restrain him, raised them to his lips and kissed them twice.

A moment later he had dropped the hands and was at the door.

"In Heaven's name, who are you?" cried the lace-maker. "I cannot account for your actions, unless—"

"Unless I am crazy, eh?" he broke in, smiling for the first time. "I have passed through enough to break up the strongest mind; but if I were mad, a sight of you would cure the malady. There may come a time when—"

He did not complete the sentence, but opened the door, and with one look over his shoulder at her standing near the table, disappeared, and she heard his footsteps on the sidewalk for a second.

It was some time before the girl recovered from the effects of this singular visitation. She had lost all feeling for work any more that night, and found herself sitting at the table with bowed head and blanched face.

Who was that man, and what had impelled his unaccountable actions?

Why had he burst in upon her, with his half-told story of a checkered life, and why did he want to kiss her hands, as though they belonged to a lost child?

It was in vain that the pretty lace-maker thought about the nocturnal visitor; she could get nothing out of the mystery, and at last let it go.

She would have given anything if Mr. Lester or Daisy Dell had come. She wanted to tell the story of the call, and to ask them if the mystery of the man's actions was as deep to them as to her.

When Bella lifted her head she picked up her work and bore it to the work-box.

All at once she glanced at the window, the curtain of which was not all the way down.

What did she see that startled her so? Whose face was that which, pressed against the pane, caused her to fall back with a stifled scream, and grasp the bureau for support.

It was not the face she had just seen in her own house. No, it did not belong to the man who had wanted to kiss her hand.

It was a face handsomer than his; a face set with black eyes that seemed to devour her with greed; but while she looked it was withdrawn, and she saw it no more.

The frightened girl would have dropped to the floor in a swoon, if a sudden burst of courage had not checked the faint.

In another moment she ran to the window and lowered the curtain.

As she did this she heard hasty feet on the sidewalk, as if some one were running away.

For ten minutes she heard the beating of her own heart in the silence of the room.

Suddenly the little clock on the mantel began to strike.

The last stroke was dying away when foot-

steps came up the steps outside and Bella started toward the door with a cry of terror.

"He sha'n't come in!" passed her lips, just as if she could have kept any one out in her frightened condition. "I have had surprises enough for one night—"

"I say, Miss Bella?" cried a boyish voice at this moment.

The lace-maker uttered an exclamation of joy.

"It is little Dan, the bootblack!" she exclaimed, and the following moment she had opened the door and was looking at the boy who stood before her.

"Come in, Dan."

"No, there's a man dead in the gutter right at the corner," said the boy.

Bella gave vent to a quick cry and paled again.

"I thought I'd let you know first," continued the boy. "I stumbled upon him a moment ago, and it almost scared me out of a year's growth. He's warm yet Bella."

"Are you sure he is dead, Dan?"

"Right sure; but won't you come and see?"

The pretty lace-maker of New York seemed to take courage.

"Yes, I will go with you, Dan," she said, and the two left the house.

The bootblack led Bella to the corner and pointed at the object lying in the gutter.

The light of the nearest lamp falling upon it told the girl that it was a man and she was bending over it with heart in her throat.

All at once she recoiled with a sharp exclamation which caught the boy's attention.

"Do you know him, Bella?" asked Bootblack Dan.

"I have seen his face before," she said. "He was at my house just a little while ago. But let us keep this secret to ourselves, Dan. Now, go and tell some one about the man in the gutter."

The bootblack bounded off and Bella, with another look into the upturned face framed in grayish hair, wheeled and went home.

She could think of nothing but the man in the gutter for some time. Then all at once came back the handsome face at the window. Had one followed the other?

"Oh, that Mr. Lester or Daisy Dell would come!" cried Bella. "The man at the corner was murdered because he came to my house. The face I saw at my window belongs to his assassin. In Heaven's name, what means all this?" and the fair lace-maker sunk white-faced into a chair.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRAP CATCHES NOTHING.

THE letter dropped into the street box by Blossom reached its destination and Daisy Dell opened it and perused its strange sentences in Lester's presence.

When he had finished it he handed it to his friend.

"So the acquaintance you formed on the vessel is accruing to your good," said the young man, looking up and meeting the boy detective's gaze. "Of course you will go and see David Doon?"

"I don't like the house."

"Then, you know something about the place?"

"I do. A year ago, while following a trail for Old Moslem, I had occasion to visit that same house and my experience there was not very pleasant. It seems to me that it is a strange place for my ship-friend to hide."

The young ferret took back the letter and read it once more.

"I am going to reconnoiter a little before I cross the threshold of that house," he said.

"While this letter may be all right, I don't intend to put my head into any trap if I can help it."

As yet Daisy Dell had heard nothing of Bella's visitor and her adventures with the two men, and went off without hearing of the face at the window and the one in the gutter.

Night was falling when he reached the vicinity of the house mentioned in the decoy letter.

He stopped at the mouth of the alley-like street and looked toward the trap.

"I guess not, Mr. Doon—not to-night, at any rate," he said with a smile. "I suppose your valuable information won't spoil; but I don't propose to visit you nor any one else in that old trap after dark."

Daisy Dell turned away and walked off.

"What in the world does that mean?" said a voice which the boy spotter did not hear. "He was on the very threshold of my trap, but all at once he turns off and coolly leaves me to hold the bag. I don't understand it. No one can have warned him for no one shared the secret of

that letter with me and I know he got it, for why was he here just now?"

The failure of Blossom to catch the game for which he had baited one of the darkest traps of the great city was enough to disgust him.

He watched Daisy Dell a few moments and then followed after.

"I can't afford to let him go. There's too much at stake and I have given my pledge to the major and he must be caged."

The boy ferret went to the humble house where Mother Rockaway had domiciled herself after her narrow escape from the asylum, and was at once admitted.

Blossom stole round to one of the side windows and saw a face that made him start.

"I thought Mother Rockaway was rusticated at the asylum," said he, with a grin. "The major must have jumped at conclusions for there she is as large as life. Cooped up for a long time, eh? Well, major, my opinion is that you are still liable to meet her on the street. And while Mother Rockaway is at large you won't hear the last of the Caleb Pine business."

Daisy Dell was relating his last adventure to Mother Rockaway to whom he showed the letter, explaining it as he saw it.

After awhile Blossom betook himself from the window and drew off to wait for the boy's reappearance. He had a good deal of patience, had Blossom; but he was worn out this time, and when he went back to the window to see what kept the fox he wanted, he found it dark and the house silent.

"Tripped again—twice in one night!" he growled. "I must be losing my grip."

Off he went cursing his ill luck and in a short time was back in his old quarters, to start on entering, for at the table where he had left no one sat a man who eyed him from the moment of his entering the house.

"Been waiting for you," smiled this man who was broad of shoulder and had a savage, hang-dog look.

Blossom, standing in the middle of the floor, fell back almost to the door and stared at the man.

"I don't know you," he said.

"I don't look like I used to, that's a fact," was the reply. "How are you getting along now?"

There was no answer. Blossom was still puzzled.

"How's the old major?"

All at once a light seemed to break in upon Blossom's mind. He took a sudden step toward the man, but stopped near the table and looked again.

"I guess you know me now?"

"I do."

Then for a full minute the two men looked at one another like two wolves.

"I find that he's struck it rich," said the stranger at last. "I am told that he is finding lost heirs and so forth. You are helping him, I suppose. Don't you want another partner?"

"No."

"Well, you needn't be so all-fired short about it. I'm a piece of china to be handled with care."

Blossom seemed to be comparing his own strength with the man's. He was looking him over like one gladiator looks over his adversary in hopes of finding weak points, for it was evident that this man had come into the game for no good to the conspirators.

"I've seen somebody who would block your game if the truth was only known to her," said the stranger after a pause.

"We know all you profess to know, so we don't want any advice."

The man at the table got up, showing his full figure, which was tall, and his face was darkly handsome.

Blossom stood still, but seemed about to launch himself upon the man before him when the stranger threw out one of his hands and covered him.

"You think you are well entrenched—you and the old major do, I see," he said. "You are gallow's food, both of you. You have hoodwinked the whole city by the game you have played successfully. Why, the boy you have installed as heir to the Ferris estate, is a street Arab, without a drop of Ferris blood in his veins. But for your picking him up, he would never have been anybody but Andy Atom, the rat of the tenement."

These words seem to strike Blossom like blows between the eyes.

"You have drank up all the share of the infamous money that has fallen into your hands. Any one can see that by your face. You are a bloated drunkard and conspirator; a thief with-

out any conscience. You would as soon murder as steal. Say, how did you men get possession of the will? And whatever became of Old Caleb Pine, who came to this city from his Pennsylvania farm?"

"Why don't you go on?" exclaimed Blossom. "It is easy for any one to make accusations. You can't prove a single one you have made, and all we would have to do to have you arrested, would be to tell a tithe of what we know and—"

"I wish you would tell it," broke in the other with a laugh. "Yes, I wish you would conclude to have me arrested. I would like nothing better than to stand before you and the major in court and tell what I know. It would be story for story, and I would like to see the result. What do you say? Shall we tell them in the courts?"

The face of Blossom was white. He watched the man like a hawk, and when he came forward, straight toward him, he did not move an inch.

"I haven't said what I intend to do," he went on. "How much is the property worth, or I should have asked: How much is left of it?"

"Don't ask me," growled Blossom.

"Then, I will ask the major."

"Just as you like."

The following moment the stranger reached the door, yet Blossom had not moved. The big, brown hand of the visitor turned the knob, and the portal opened.

"We may meet again," he said, looking back over his shoulder. "If you follow me, as you have followed others in your time, you might not enjoy the experience."

He shut the door in Blossom's face, and that worthy seemed to hear the noise of the closing in his very heart.

"Jerusalem! who looked for him back at this stage of the game?" he ejaculated. "What did the major tell me when I questioned him last about that man? He either didn't know, or else he lied—one or the other."

Major Manilla's right bower went forward and threw the door open again. He now held in his hand a six-shooter, around the butt of which ran his murderous-looking fingers, but he saw no one who looked like the visitor.

"I shall tell him at once," he went on. "The major must know that the one man we fear has come back."

He hurried down the street and turned several corners before he drew up in front of the elegant house occupied by Major Manilla and Andy the heir.

Blossom jerked the bell, and was admitted by a man in a smoking-jacket, who uttered an exclamation of joy at sight of him.

"What! is the trap sprung already?" cried the major.

"Not quite, but there's another rat at large as dangerous as the one I was to catch. I have just seen him, and he has asked after you and the kid, and wanted to know if you would like to take in another pard."

Major Manilla's face was all expectancy now, and there was but little color in his cheeks.

"Who was it, Blossom?" he asked.

"Cad Capper. You know you told me that he was as 'silent' as the old Pennsylvanian, and—"

"Cad Capper?" echoed the man in the smoking-jacket. "Blossom, there must be no rest for us until that fellow is caged."

"Let me see," said Blossom, counting on his big fingers. "There's Cad Capper, Daisy Dell, the man who calls himself Ferris, and—"

He was interrupted by a loud cry, and Andy Atom fell headlong into the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

COAL OIL AND MATCHES.

MAJOR MANILLA's boy *protege* was the picture of fright.

For a moment he lay sprawling on the floor, uttering loud cries of terror, and if the major had not rushed forward and jerked him up without ceremony, he might have sprawled there a long time.

"Here," cried Major Manilla, shaking Andy till his teeth seemed to rattle in his head. "What on earth do you mean?"

"I want to go back to the old tenement. I haven't been happy since I came here, and, then, I am tired of playing what I am not."

Blossom and the major exchanged looks.

"What's that?" exclaimed the latter. "You're tired of doing what?"

Andy saw the fierce look in the eyes fastened upon him and did not speak.

"Come; this is no way to keep what you've got. You would look pretty, wouldn't you, go-

ing back to the rat-hole after what has happened to your fortunes? You are not going to do anything of the kind. You are Franklin Ferris, and that's who you will be until we ordain otherwise."

"I think," whispered Blossom to the major—"I think we would have got along better with the girl."

There was no reply to this. Major Manilla was busy taking care of Andy, who still trembled like a leaf.

"What brought you into this room in that way?" he asked. "There are no ghosts in this house."

"I'm not so sure about that."

"Nonsense! You will go back to your room and if we hear any more such whines from you you may go back to the rat-hole as you desire, but branded for life."

Released at last, the boy nabob slunk from the room eyed savagely by Major Manilla who, when the door had shut upon him, turned to his partner.

"The young rascal has been fear struck ever since he encountered the man who called himself Ferris. He is liable to give the snap away at any time, but if he ever does he will wish he had never seen the gutters of New York. So Cad Capper has come back?"

"The man is here and breathes vengeance."

"Where does he hold forth?"

"I have not discovered that yet, but a little time devoted to him will settle that point."

"And the boy?"

"He came within a few feet of the trap, but slipped away and I didn't get to catch him. But that is nothing. He can be trapped yet, for I am fertile in trap-making, and if one fails I set another; that's all. But I thought you told me that Mother Rockaway was safe in the asylum."

"She is. I saw her arrested, and you know what the papers said?"

"Yes; but she is a long ways from the mad-house. She is in the city and I have seen her in consultation with the boy ferret."

A curse slipped through Major Manilla's teeth.

"Will you give me her number?" he asked, and Blossom supplied it from memory.

Half an hour later a man came out of the house and hurried off.

Instead of resuming his smoking jacket Major Manilla glided up the stairs and listened at the door of a certain room near the first landing.

"I can hear the young rat in there," he said to himself. "He is giving me more trouble than I like, and to-morrow I will read the riot act to him in fine shape. I intend to let him know that he dare not expose a single one of my plans, nor breathe a word explanatory of the past. Fortunately, he does not know the whole truth, therefore he could not tell much; but still he knows enough to wreck the whole game and make things very unpleasant for Blossom and I."

Major Manilla locked the door, and all the others in the house, with the exception of one. Having done this he retired to his own chamber for a spell and emerged a different looking man, and one who no longer resembled his real self.

Andy had been locked in the big house, and the major was on the street with a very important mission in view.

At that very moment Daisy Dell was watching Blossom whose trap had failed to catch him.

The boy detective was very anxious to discover something concerning the disappearance of Caleb Pine; the farmer who fell into Major Manilla's clutches in the Jersey City Depot, as told in one of our first chapters.

He knew the trail was an old one, but this did not deter him, and he began the hunt with a vigor.

He followed Blossom some distance in hopes that the boy would lead him to something; but he went straight home from Andy Atom's house, and the young spotter was compelled to leave him there.

Not long afterward he found himself in another part of the city and one which he knew pretty well, though nothing but business of a secret nature ever called him into it.

Before his abduction by Major Manilla and the enforced exile to Ceylon, he had discovered that the major and his partner sometimes frequented a house in that quarter, and at the time of his capture he was on the eve of looking into it.

It was probable that Caleb Pine had been taken to this house which was old and grim of aspect, and just the place from its looks for a dark crime.

Daisy Dell had no idea of finding the Pennsyl-

vanian alive, for Mother Rockaway had told him enough about him to lead him to the belief that the old man had resisted the conspirators and that, by doing so, had forfeited his life. But what he wanted was proofs of crime against the major, for he knew that Policeman Poynter could identify him as the man who met Caleb Pine on the depot.

Daisy Dell found the old house with the same deserted look it had when he went off.

He slipped to the rear and after several attempts forced an entrance and found himself inside.

There was not a particle of furniture inside the shell.

As the shutters were closed, Daisy Dell struck a light and began to explore the place.

He went from room to room frightening scores of rats as he advanced, and now and then disturbing the slumbers of a bat.

By and by he reached the cellar which was closed to him, but a piece of iron found in one of the upper rooms enabled him to open the door.

The boy detective stood in a gloomy place, damp and unwholesome, and his little light flickered until he thought he would be left in the dense darkness.

He ran his light over the ground like a Jack-a-lantern looking carefully at the soil to see if it had lately been disturbed.

All at once he was checked by a noise that sent a thrill through his whole frame and in another instant he had sprung across the cellar and shut the door.

Some one had entered the place and was in one of the upper rooms!

This was enough of itself to chill Daisy Dell's blood, and for a few seconds he stood in the gloom for he had extinguished his light and was expecting to have a dark lantern flashed upon him.

Every now and then he could hear some one moving about overhead with the stealth of a cat, and all at once he heard the crack of a match.

He lost no time in getting to the door, and in another moment was on the grimy steps.

Proceeding on he discovered a man kneeling in one corner of the large room into which he looked. He could not see the face of this man, for it was turned from him, but the shape of the figure looked familiar.

Spellbound on the step stood the boy ferret with his eyes fixed upon this man.

What was he doing in that faraway corner of the old house?

Suddenly he saw him draw back, and then noticed that he had piled a lot of kindling against the rotten chair-board, and that he held in one hand a can, the contents of which he poured over the heap.

In a flash a horrible thought took possession of the boy ferret's mind.

The house was being set on fire!

Evidently satisfied with his work, the man suddenly got up and threw a blaze upon the heap.

In a moment a flame leaped up, and for a second revealed the incendiary to Daisy Dell.

He was tall and rather strangely dressed. He wore good clothes for a house-burner, but there was a vicious look in his eyes, and something grossly terrible in his cast of countenance.

"I guess that will do the job," the boy detective heard him say, as he drew off and moved toward the door. "The closed shutters will prevent the fire from being seen till too late for the fire-laddies to save the old shell, and then all will be well. There's nothing like doing a thing up brown, and the fire will leave no traces whatever."

Daisy Dell kept his eyes riveted on the speaker as he came forward and almost touched him in reaching the rear door.

Once the man looked back and now had the leaping light full in his face.

The young spotter almost betrayed himself with a cry that struggled to his lips.

The fire had revealed the true identity of the villain he had watched with such unvarying care.

He knew the incendiary.

A moment later the door was shut and the man was gone.

Daisy Dell could not bear his footsteps for the hiss of the fire, which, fed by coal-oil, was leaping higher and higher, and threatened to envelop the whole house in flames in a few seconds.

The boy sprung from his hiding-place and stood for a moment undecided in the room.

The old shell, as dry as gunpowder, was doomed. The house-burner knew just what he was doing when he applied his match, and there

was nothing for Daisy Dell to do now but effect his own escape.

He lost no time. Springing to the door he threw it open and leaped out into the open air.

The whole room behind him was a seething fire!

CHAPTER XV.

FROM MANSION TO CELL.

"So I'm locked up like a prisoner, am I? Major Manilla has locked every door in the house as if he was afraid I would get out and go back to the old shell. Well, I'm tired of living in fear here, I don't care if I have all the money I want. I would sooner be Andy Atom and have my own way than be under the major's eye and have to do only what he wants done."

The speaker, of course was Andy Atom, known where he dwelt as Franklin Ferris, the boy nabob.

He had emerged from his room some time after the major's departure in disguise only to discover that every door had been carefully locked and that he was a prisoner in the big house.

"From what I have seen and heard within the last few days something is in danger of happening. That man who came to the window and afterward into the house and frightened me almost out of my skin, called himself Ferris and said I was a base impostor and that if the major and Blossom had their just due they would dance on nothing. They made me believe that I am the real Franklin Ferris, the lost heir though sometimes I have wondered if there wasn't some trickery about it, they watched me so closely and played their game with such care. What if I should be arrested for a fraud? What if I went to prison for playing what I am not?"

Andy's words paled his own cheeks and he fell back and dropped into Major Manilla's elegant smoking chair.

"There's no one in the house but myself," he went on. "I think I can get out if I try. Why not? If I am not the rightful heir why do they lock me in when they go out? I wish I had never seen Major Manilla and his pard."

He went into the hall and then sought a window in the rear of the house. Finding that with little effort he could raise the sash, he came back to the parlor and gathered together a few things which he thought he might need in his flight, then, with a final look at the scenes he had been accustomed to since the startling change in his fortunes, he slid to the window and pried up the sash.

It was not far to the ground beneath and the following instant Andy dropped, pulled himself together and moved off.

Once on the street he ran rapidly and, dodging into an alley, soon disappeared.

"I don't know where to go," he said to himself, stopping suddenly. "I dare not go back to the old house for there is where they would look for me first. Major Manilla would come poking about the old trap and I would be dragged back to something worse than playing heir. What shall I do?"

Presently the runaway recollected a friend whom he had known in other days and in another moment was on his way through the shadows to his abode.

"Hello, there, Andy?" called out a voice at sound of which the boy fell back and shivered.

"My limp has betrayed me," he gasped. "A thousand curses upon your head, Major Manilla!"

The boy waited for the person who had accosted him to come up and when he caught sight of the figure he gave vent to a cry of joy and leaped forward.

"Is it you, Davy?" he cried. "I want to be sheltered and that right off."

"What, are you tired of playing rich boy?"

"I'm nearly tired of life itself. Where do you roost now?"

"Down the alley yonder."

"Alone?"

"No. Jot and I roost together."

"Who is Jot?"

"My parrot."

"Oh," cried Andy, much relieved. "Let us go at once. I feel that some one is after me already. I want to hide till the hunt is over. I wish I had never left the old rookery, Davy."

"What, ain't you Franklin Ferris?"

"I don't believe I am. I think the whole thing is a villainous scheme to enrich Major Manilla and Blossom."

"Then, why don't you expose them?"

Andy Atom drew back with a shudder.

"I never dare do that," he said. "I would be hunted down and killed. They would finish me like they finished the old man who came

from Pennsylvania. I've heard them talking together several times and caught enough to feel that the old farmer never went back to his farm. But I can't tell you all that I know here. I want to hide from Major Manilla and Blossom."

The two boys started down the alley designated by the youth called Davy and the shadows that prevailed there hid them from sight.

Andy was shown into a hovel, the one dirty room of which was hardly large enough to hold more than one, and there they sat on low stools while the boy nabob told in whispers all he had passed through since quitting the old tenement.

"Why don't you go to Daisy Dell, the boy detective, and tell him all that you told me?" asked Davy.

"Heavens, I couldn't think of doing that! It would get me into trouble, for you know I could be hauled over the coals for helping on the scheme to win the Ferris money. No, Davy; I would not do that for the world."

"But Daisy Dell ought to know, for he could spoil the plans the major has laid."

"I don't believe any one can do that," said Andy. "You don't know the cunning of that sleek scoundrel. What was that?"

The frightened boy had started at a slight sound and grown pale.

"There are rats in this house, lots of them."

Davy went to the door and listened. He was watched by Andy like a hawk, and when he fell back and took from the nearest shelf a hatchet, the young fugitive sprung up and clutched his arm.

"Some one's out there," said Davy, in a whisper.

Andy shrunk back with a groan and his teeth chattered.

For some time Davy stood on the defensive with his hand on the hatchet.

"I'm afraid it's the cops," he said at last. "The truth is, Andy, I have been doing a little sly work of late and—"

The next second the sounds were heard again and then the door flew open.

Davy with a cry dropped the hatchet and fell back across the room, while Andy uttered an exclamation of terror and would have slipped away if a hand hadn't closed on his arm.

"Why, there's two of 'em!" said one of the policemen. "The nest is bigger than I thought."

Meantime Davy had been secured, and when the two were held by one of the men, the house was searched, and to Andy's surprise a lot of stolen goods were brought to light.

"Where do you belong?" asked one of the officers, surveying the good clothes in which Andy Atom was clad.

Davy, hardened in crime, burst into a laugh.

"Don't you know him?" he cried. "Why that's Franklin Ferris alias Andy Atom, who used to inhabit the old Bleecker tenement."

"Is that true?" asked the man who held the boys.

"I'm Andy Atom," was the reply. "I don't claim to be Franklin Ferris. I would sooner go to jail than back to the house I left awhile ago."

"I guess both of you will be accommodated," and the following minute the boys were escorted from the place.

"This is better than hiding in an alley," thought Andy when he found himself the occupant of a cell at the station. "They won't look for me here. By Jupiter! I'm in luck for all."

While he was communing with his thoughts in the depths of the cell, Major Manilla was unlocking the front door of the big house.

He went in to find a draught of air, which took him to the rear part of the building, where he was confronted with an open window that made him start.

In another instant he was bounding up the stairs and when he had looked into the room occupied by Andy Atom, he uttered a mad curse.

"The fox has given me the slip! He has gone back to the old nest. I will show him that I am not the man he thinks me. I have a grip of iron and he shall find it at his wrist in less than an hour. We don't intend to be beaten by a boy like him. I wish now we had tried the girl scheme. There is more submission in a girl, and I am sure we could have secured the lace-maker for our purposes."

He did not remain long in the house, but went out and bent his steps toward the boy's former haunt.

The old tenement had not changed in appearance. It stood tall and homely in the light of the street lamps, and finding the hall door open, Major Manilla ran up the creaking steps to the topmost floor.

He did not stop to knock on the door of what had been the boy nabob's former abode, but burst it in and almost fell headlong into a dark room.

"Who's there?" cried out a voice in the gloom. It was the harsh voice of a man and the tones completely sobered the major.

"Thieves! robbers! murder!" rung out on the close air and the major was beating a precipitate retreat when he was caught by a pair of hands and held.

Suddenly there were sounds of feet in the corridors outside and the room swarmed with the tenants of the old rookery.

"Hand him over to the police!" cried several, and despite the major's assertions that he had merely invaded the wrong room, he was escorted to the sidewalk and held there while a nimble-footed boy ran for the nearest officer.

"The whole thing was a foolish mistake of mine," explained Major Manilla. "I got into the wrong room, and would like to ask if I look like a thief?"

The policeman smiled and walked off with the major.

"Don't let that man go," said a voice at which Major Manilla started. "I have a charge to make against him. He has just set fire to a house to cover up a crime greater still."

Major Manilla leaned forward to look at the figure in the light of the corner lamp, and his face lost color when he recognized Daisy Dell, the boy detective.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAISY DELL SCORES A HIT.

WHILE these scenes were being enacted on the streets of New York a man who seemed to be hovering between life and death was stretched on a cot in the accident hospital, watched by a lot of surgeons who had just decided that the chances were against him.

He was the man found in the gutter near Bella Blair's home by Dan, the bootblack, and had been taken to the hospital, dangerously wounded by some blunt instrument.

Nobody seemed to know anything about him and as he was unconscious, he could not settle the question of identity.

Dan had kept his promise with Bella, and when questioned had said that he knew nothing of how the man came to be in the vicinity where he had been found, so that the whole affair was a dark one to all who tried to investigate it.

Bella had told both Lester, her lover, and Daisy Dell of the strange events, and they had visited the hospital where the man lay without recognizing him.

The boy detective thought he looked familiar, but the death-struck features prevented full recognition, and Lester said he had never seen the man before.

"I am almost sure from what Bella says that the face she saw at the window belonged to Cad Capper, the man who once caught me on the street, thinking I was Sidewalk Sam, the spy. You know, Lester, that I agreed to do some work against him, seeing that he hated Major Manilla; but he disappeared soon afterward and the whole thing was dropped. If the face at the window was Capper's it shows that he has turned up again, and it looks dark against him; for the man found in the gutter had just left Bella's house where he carried on more like a madman than a person entirely sane."

"Cad Capper may have struck the man," said young Lester. "I would look for him if I were you."

"I will," said Daisy Dell. "If he is back in the city he will, in all likelihood, frequent his old haunts and I will see what I can do. Blossom will probably set another trap for me, but he will succeed no better with it than he did with his last one. I am not going to be captured by the two plotters, and the game is too nearly played out for me to fall into their clutches."

This conversation took place a few hours before the events recorded in the last chapter, and Daisy Dell set off to scour the old haunts of the man named Cad Capper.

He was very anxious to find the man thus named, for, in addition to his being an enemy of Major Manilla's, he seemed to be the person who had struck the dying man at the hospital, and he (Daisy Dell) wanted to see him swing for his murderous work.

As he turned a certain street he became aware that he was followed.

Across the street, passing through light and shadow with him, was a figure which looked suspicious.

The boy detective eyed it until he became convinced that he was being tracked but by whom? Was Blossom trying to make up for the failure of his trap and was he about to spring one which would not fail?

Daisy Dell dodged into an alley, but beyond its mouth drew his body into a doorway and waited.

Presently the feet of the man who had shadowed him came to the opening and stopped.

The keen eyes of Daisy Dell saw the leaning figure of the man, and noted how eagerly he was looking into the alley while he listened for a sound.

"He went in here for I saw him," said a voice.

In a flash the boy ferret rushed from his place of concealment and appeared so suddenly to the speaker that he fell back with a cry.

"So it is you—the very man I want to see!" said the young detective. "Where have you been so long, Mr. Capper?"

The man looked at him with a puzzled expression, but did not run away.

"Why didn't you give me some sort of signal and then I wouldn't have dropped into this alley. I did not know who was following me."

"Thought I was the major or his pard, eh?" smiled Capper.

"I didn't know but that you were. Where have you been keeping yourself so long?"

"And where have you been at the same time? Come, turn about is fair play," and the man shook the boy while he laughed.

"I've been to Ceylon's spicy isle," grinned Daisy Dell.

"Well, I haven't. I've just been keeping dark, but, as you see, I'm on deck again."

"Well, the plot succeeded, eh, Mr. Capper?"

"You mean the big one Major Manilla and Blossom had in hand?"

"Yes."

"Well, yes. They have found an heir for the Ferris estate, but who is he?"

"Do you know, Capper?"

"Don't I?" and the man laughed once more.

"Why, they have picked up a tenement rat and made him rich while they suck his blood like leeches. But that is not all. How did they get possession of the will which seemed to settle the matter?"

"You seem to know a good deal," said the boy ferret.

"I ought to. I know the whole plot from the beginning. I am the missing witness; I could, if I would, go into court and upset the whole affair. I know how Nolan Ferris, the father, disappeared; I know where his daughter is at this very moment—the boy is dead—and I know more than that."

"What ever became of Ferris himself?"

"Oh, he's dead, too."

"Are you sure of that, Capper?"

"I can swear that I saw him die. See here; we don't want to talk about these things on the street. I believe you once promised to do some work for me."

"I did."

"Will you do it now?"

"You must tell me just what you want done."

Without more ado Cad Capper led Daisy Dell to a house near by, the door to which he unlocked, and the two went in.

"I nest here," said the man. "Ever since I came back to the city I've been in this place. You want to know what I know, eh? I'll give you an idea."

A moment's silence followed, and then the man began.

For the next few moments Daisy Dell sat spell-bound in the rickety chair he had taken.

What a story Cad Capper told!

He was from the South, and had known the Ferrises as well as Major Manilla and Blossom.

Step by step he followed the history of the family, from the hour of the mother's wedding on the Pennsylvania homestead, to her death, and the sudden disappearance of the two children.

He told how the father, overwhelmed with sorrow, became dissipated, and abandoned the rich plantation, after making a will, which he sent North to Caleb Pine, and how from that time nothing had been heard of him.

Cad Capper knew more than he cared to tell. This was apparent to the keen-eyed boy detective, who did not let one word of the startling narrative escape him.

It was pretty late when Cad Capper finished his story, and Daisy Dell said:

"That's a thrilling story, Mr. Capper, and think what a sensation it would create in the courts of New York. Why don't you tell it there? You say you know where Florence Fer-

ris is; that you can lay your hand on the girl this very night."

"I can do that; but I don't intend to, that's all."

"But there may be thousands in it for you. You see how Major Manilla and his partner set up an heir—a false one—and made money out of the job; now, if you would bring forward the real heir, she would be willing to pay you well for your trouble, and besides, you would be getting even with Major Manilla."

Cad Capper smiled, but made no reply.

"I must go," said Daisy Dell, rising. "I would like to show you something at my rooms."

"Is it connected with this case?"

"It is."

"Then, I will go with you. We don't want to be seen together by the major, you know."

"Not just yet, anyhow," laughed Daisy Dell.

The boy detective led Capper down the streets, and all at once, in passing a statuesque policeman who posed on a certain corner, he stopped, and suddenly covered his companion with his finger.

"That's one of my men, Sergeant Nick," said the boy. "That is Cad Capper, the man who struck the unconscious patient in the hospital."

In a moment the policeman was all action and the instant he stepped toward Capper that worthy straightened and fell back.

"Don't make any demonstration, sir," were the words that assailed him. "I reckon my friend Daisy knows what he's about; never knew him to make a mistake yet and I've known him from a little shaver."

With the countenance of a fiend, Cad Capper, already in the grip of the stalwart policeman, turned upon the boy detective and would have hurled himself upon him with crushing force if the nimble shadow had not sprung aside.

"We will settle this when I get out," he said, madly.

"You may never get out. If the man dies, you may swing."

Sullen silence followed this and Daisy Dell accompanied Capper to the station where the charge of attempted murder was placed against his name, and when he was about to be escorted to a cell he wheeled toward the young ferret and exclaimed:

"What I told you about the girl heir was all a cunningly spun hoax, ha, ha, ha!"

"We will see about that, Capper. You once told Bella, the lace-maker, that she looked like her mother."

There was a quick start on the prisoner's part and he was marched away.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN A TRAP AT LAST.

DAISY DELL did not turn back until he knew that Major Manilla was on his way to the station where he would have plenty of time to reflect over the turning of the tide.

Two successes such as he had scored in one night were enough to turn the head of a boy less cool than the young street scout; but he made no boast of them to any one, not even to Lester, whom he encountered shortly after his fortunate apprehension of the major.

Eager to secure Andy Atom, whose testimony was all important, if the boy could only be induced to tell all he knew, Daisy Dell turned toward the big house on the up-town street in hopes of catching the boy nabob in bed.

With the key taken from the major's pocket at the boy detective's request, there would be no trouble in entering the house, and Daisy Dell concluded that he was enough to manage Andy without the help of a policeman whose presence might frighten the cripple and seal his lips for good.

It was about the time of these occurrences that Andy and his old friend Davy fell into the clutches of the law, but of the arrest Daisy Dell was ignorant, else he would not have directed his steps toward the young nabob's house.

The wide-awake shadow found the house as silent as the grave when he entered it, and in a moment he was climbing the stairs to Andy's own apartment.

He expected to find the boy asleep and imagined the surprise his visit would occasion.

Daisy Dell listened at several doors, but heard no noise. The whole house was still.

At last he tried one of the doors and finding it unlocked, went in and stopped.

The following moment he fell back, his heart in his throat, for there came out from a corner of the room a man whose hands gripped a dark lantern, the light of which was suddenly flashed in his face.

Burglars!

The young detective seemed to recoil to the

wall, but the man had seen him and he stood like a prisoner awaiting sentence of death.

He saw by the light of the lantern that the face of the person before him was masked; that he had very broad shoulders and was as strong as a lion.

"By Jove! this is strange luck," cried the masked man. "I did not look for you here. You missed the trap I set awhile ago, but I will make sure of you now."

It was Blossom, playing robber in the house of his old partner!

The bull's-eye of the lantern seemed to penetrate to the boy detective's very heart; but what thrilled him most was the discovery that the man before him was Blossom.

All at once a hand was put out and he was caught.

"What brought you here?" asked Blossom. "Don't you know that you are in the tiger's den?"

"I came to this house with my eyes open," was the answer. "I am here in the interest of justice."

Blossom laughed.

"That's all nice enough to talk about, but you may never get to turn your discoveries to advantage. Why didn't you come on to the old house instead of turning back?"

"I knew the house. You wrote that letter from the wrong place. Everybody knows old Seeley, the suspected thief. I thought that my fellow passenger would not take up lodgings there, and that is why you failed to entrap me."

There was no reply, Blossom looking at the boy spy and seeming to wonder what to do next.

"This way," he suddenly said, striding from the room with his hand still on Daisy's wrist. "I intend to lock you up till the major comes."

The young prisoner said nothing.

He was taken to the parlor where Blossom bound him and then sat down at the major's writing-desk.

"How will that do, if the major comes home before I run across him on the street?" he said, thrusting a piece of paper into Daisy Dell's face.

The captive read:

"DEAR MAJOR:—This is to inform you that the young rat who has been bothering us so long is in the cellar, safe and sound, though secured, waiting for you. I found him in the house and leave him to your tender care. I have taken all the money I could find, including the packages you drew yesterday, and have concluded to get out of the city, for the boy, 'Franklin,' is bound to give us trouble and I don't want to risk trap-setting any longer. So, good-by; we've been pals long enough and you've always taken the lion's share; but to-night I've found enough to enrich me. Do what you please with the prisoner in the cellar.

"BLOSSOM."

The eyes behind the mask twinkled while the boy detective read the message.

When it had been read, the paper was folded and laid on the desk and Daisy Dell was conducted from the room.

Once or twice he thought of telling Blossom that the major had been caged; that Cad Capper had also been caught, and that the game was about played out; but he did not, and soon saw the heavy doors of the cellar swing open.

It looked like a dungeon to the boy spotter, and when he found himself in the dark and heard the door locked from the outside, he realized that he was in a desperate durance.

With his hands tied behind his back and surrounded by dense darkness, the young street-walker stood for a few moments against the door and gave himself up to thought.

Far away he heard a door open and shut and then all was silence.

Blossom, elated over the success of his play, was quitting the old mansion and in a short time would be beyond reach of the officers of the law.

Daisy Dell walked around the cellar, now and then striking something with his feet and almost losing his balance in the gloom, and at last bringing up at the door which was to him as so much iron which could not be moved.

"Walled in! Shut up by the very man whose trap I escaped a few hours ago!" he exclaimed. "I am an imprisoned rat at the very door of victory. This is worse than being caught by Major Manilla."

In vain were his efforts to free himself by tugging at his bonds. He could not break the cords, nor could he stretch them enough to give his wrists play.

The striking of a clock in a neighboring steeple told the boy that it was past midnight, and the sounds seemed to penetrate to his dungeon like the knell of doom.

He thought of a hundred ways by which people had escaped from prison, but they profit-

ed him nothing. He threw himself against the door, but in vain. He fell back each time inwardly heaping anathemas upon Blossom's head and vowing to follow him to the end of the world if he ever got out.

What of Blossom?

He had slipped from the house and, in a little while, was far away.

Watchful always, he looked behind him like the suspicious rascal that he was.

He started at every step he heard, but at last reached the river whose waters lashed the pier and receded into the darkness beyond.

"Why go?" he suddenly exclaimed. "New York is a big place and the major, after reading that note, won't look for me here. I have no fear of the boy, for my old friend will take care of him. The trail has ended for the gutter fox, and I am the winner in the long run."

Blossom turned back and went over some of the ground he had just traversed.

"What do you want?" cried a woman to whom he suddenly presented himself.

"I want to tell you a secret. I didn't have any particular interest in it, but I was there. Your brother, Caleb Pine, was killed and buried in the cellar of an old house on Q—street."

Mother Rockaway started back with a sharp cry and stared at the man.

"Who are you to tell me this?"

"Never mind that," was the answer. "I am telling you the truth. I don't care a snap if you hang the man called Major Manilla. I am done with him. I set no more traps for the rascal."

"Then, you are Blossom?"

The man looked at her and laughed; but without replying, shut the door in her face and vanished.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RUN DOWN.

MORNING came, and a man who occupied a cell in one of the station-houses of New York, awoke and stretched his limbs.

"This ain't sleeping in the big house on the avenue," he said, with a grim smile.

He had hardly made the remark ere footsteps came down the corridor, and he looked through the bars of the iron door.

What did he see?

An officer was leading a boy by the hand, and the moment the man in the cell saw the little fellow, his eyes got a wild look.

"So he has turned traitor, has he?" he cried, advancing to the door and grasping the bars as though he would tear them apart to get at the boy.

"Don't take me too close to him," cried the boy, shrinking back. "I know what he can do with his hands, for he has nearly shaken the very life out of me. That is Major Manilla, the man who schooled me to act the part of Franklin Ferris, but all the time I thought I was only Andy Atom of Bleecker street."

"What do you say?" asked the officer who had Andy in tow.

There was no reply from the man in the cell, but his eyes got another wicked gleam, and Andy was glad to be marched away.

"It begins to look as if the jig was up," mused the major, going back into the depths of his narrow room. "But one thing they can't discover. No, the fire hid that!"

From that moment he looked more like a triumphant man than one in the clutches of the law.

It was high noon when a boy who looked very like Daisy Dell ran down a certain street and at last burst into the station we have just indicated.

"Is he here yet?" he inquired of the sergeant on duty.

"I guess you'll find him where you left him last night," was the reply.

The boy detective turned to the right and all at once appeared at the door of a cell.

Manilla uttered a mad cry and recoiled from the door, to which he had gone at the sound of the voices.

"Here's a note for you, though I guess it won't be very pleasant reading just now," and Daisy Dell thrust a bit of paper between the bars.

The prisoner of the cell took it with a sullenness that savored of keen rage, and read it with clinched teeth.

"Who let you out of the cellar?" he demanded, when he looked up.

"I found a nail in the wall, and with it sawed my bonds loose and then tunneled under the door."

"Just like a rat!" growled the major. "I wish you would turn your attention to that rascal, Blossom, and hunt him down."

"It shall be done!" and Daisy withdrew.

"Now I know the game is up," he said. "The young hound has won the fight, and I am good for a term up the river."

Long before night had thrown her sable curtain over the great city, there came to Major Manilla a report that the ashes of a certain old house had been scraped away; that the ground of a cellar had been dug over, and that the body of an old man had been brought to light in all its horrid hideousness.

The handsome conspirator when he heard these things said nothing, but retired to the darkest corner of his cell.

He knew whose bones they were; he knew that the fate of old Caleb Pine was a mystery no longer.

A week rolled by, and the patient of the hospital, instead of dying, was convalescing, and could tell who struck him. He recognized as his assailant Cad Capper, and the villain confessed, saying that he knew that the man was Nolan Ferris, supposed to be dead, and that he had attempted his life because Ferris could send him "over the road" for an old crime.

With the discovery of Ferris's identity came another revelation—to the effect that Bella Blair, the pretty lace-maker, was his child, and that she, and not Andy Atom, was the true owner of the wealth for which Major Manilla had plotted.

Ferris, of course, proved his own identity and Bella's beyond a doubt, and in a short time the reunited pair moved into the house Manilla had purchased for his *protege*.

Daisy Dell kept his word with the major, for he ferreted Blossom out and had the pleasure of surprising the trap-setter before he had spent all of the money stolen from his old partner.

Blossom, in fear of the gallows, told everything he knew about Caleb Pine's disappearance, and thereby saved his own neck; but the major was not so fortunate.

He paid the full penalty of the law, and when all was over Mother Rockaway smiled triumphantly, for she knew that the death of her brother had been avenged.

As for Andy Atom, he went back to the old rookery where he took to his former life, and often remarked that he felt happier than when posing as the long-lost heir of the Ferris estates.

Daisy Dell never discovered the "Lafarge" to whom Major Manilla sent the dispatch which helped to trap him; but having won such a great victory, he did not exert himself much in that direction.

Bella, of course, has since become Mrs. Lester; Cad Capper looks out of iron diamonds; and Daisy Dell is still one of the most fearless of the shadowers of the Great City.

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